TOM PETTY BY THE HEARTBREAKERS

MOJO

The Music Magazine

THEIR SATANIC MAJESTIES MELTDOWN!

THE ROLLING STONES

PLUS! JAGGER SPEAKS! "IT WAS US AGAINST THEM"

146 REVIEWS!
KING CRIMSON, NILS FRAHM, THE BREEDERS, NEIL YOUNG

PHIL OCHS
FOLK'S DARK STAR

HOW THE BEATLES MADE XMAS FLEXI

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Paul: "I don't know where we'd be without you, really."
John: "In the army, perhaps."

THE BEATLES THANK THEIR FANS, CHRISTMAS 1964 (PAGE 46)

Alamy

!Guy caramba!: Elbow room in the cantina, On The Road, p62.

MOJO

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14 2018 PREVIEW Who and what will you be watching, reading and listening to in the year ahead? Read on for suggestions involving The Slits, The Damned, Bowie in Berlin, Roger Daltrey and a touring hologram of Roy Orbison.

23 GRAHAM FELLOWS He's the comedic mastermind behind John Shuttleworth and Jilted John. But what does the real Graham think when protective artifice is stripped away? As he prepares a new, serious solo album, he shares thoughts on life, death and vol-au-vents, and a Self-Portrait drawing.

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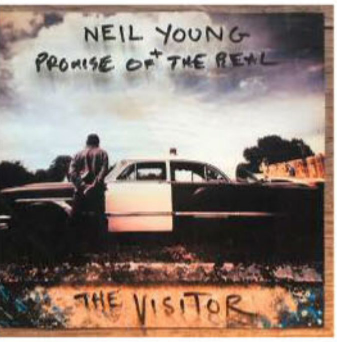
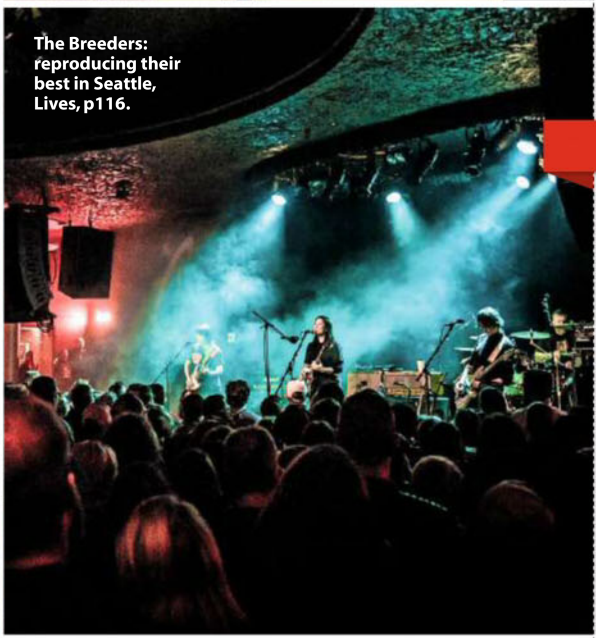
88 NEW ALBUMS Nils Frahm's latest instrumental framing. Plus, N*E*R*D, Belle And Sebastian, Tune-Yards, Neil Young, and more.

102 REISSUES A big box of King Crimson. Plus, Ramones, James Carr, Richard Hell, Thelonious Monk, Pharoah Sanders and more.

114 BOOKS Bowie illustrated, Beatles on the roof, Bruce Dickinson, Goldie, Gene Simmons.

116 LIVES The Breeders, Mary Margaret O'Hara and John Carpenter in Seattle, Utrecht, Chicago.





The Breeders: reproducing their best in Seattle, Lives, p116.

Nils Frahm, he's all melody: Lead Album, p88.

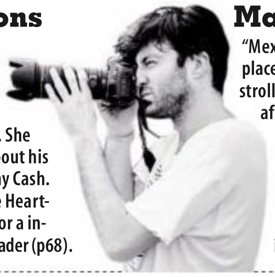
THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE

Kevin Howlett

The first BBC radio doc produced by Kevin was The Beatles At The Beeb in 1982; his most recent was *Sgt. Pepper* Forever. Besides his many other radio programmes – on David Bowie, Leonard Cohen, Paul Simon and more – his notes are included in 17 albums and four box sets by The Beatles. He writes about their Christmas fan club records on p46.

Sylvie Simmons

MOJO's Contributing Editor reviewed Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers for Sounds in 1980, calling their songs "as good as any standards". She interviewed Petty often about his music and work with Johnny Cash. This month she talks to The Heartbreakers and Stevie Nicks for a in-depth tribute to their lost leader (p68).



Mattia Zoppellaro

"Mexico City is the most charming place, more suited for a nice Sunday stroll than a gunfight," Mattia said after his On The Road shoot with Elbow (p62). His first book, Appleby, focuses on the Horse Fair in that town, and the Irish Travellers gathering there. www.contrastobooks.com/product_info.php?products_id=793

Sam Filconer, Mattia Zoppellaro, Nate Watters

MAVIS STAPLES

IF ALL I WAS WAS BLACK

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★★★★ MOJO

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★★★★ Daily Mail

★★★★ THE TIMES

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★★★★ Q MAGAZINE

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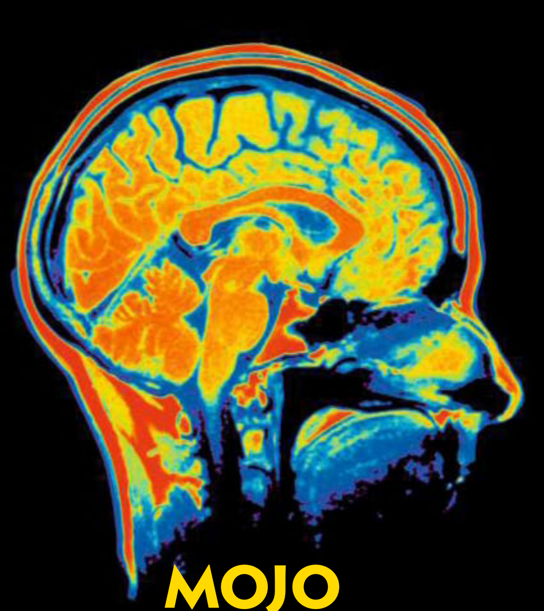


MOJO

2000 Light years from home

uk rock trips out 1967-1970

small faces, the pretty things, the crazy world of arthur brown and more

Brightest Selection
OGDENS
Nut Gone
Celebrated
FLAKE
TOBACCO

01 small faces

afterglow of your love

A re-edited, sped-up version of the standout on their 1968 album, *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake*, Afterglow Of Your Love became the Small Faces' last single, its valedictory, proto power-ballad fire a perfect finale for the mini-Mod four-piece.

(Marriott & Lane, Arranged by Small Faces) Published by EMI United Partnership Ltd. ℗1968 Immediate An Original Immediate Recording, Courtesy of Charly Acquisitions Ltd, Licensed from LicenseMusic.com ApS. www.Immediate-Records.com

RUPERTS PEOPLE

02 rupert's people

i can show you

Formed from the ashes of Sweet Feeling to promote a track their singer-guitarist Rod Lynton (aka Brosse) wrote for The Fleur De Lys before the latter's implosion, Rupert's People's irresistible third single gloried in Small Faces phasing before an ill-conceived tour of the Lebanon in '68 proved their undoing. Lynton went on to play on Lennon's *Imagine* album.

(Lynton) Published by Copyright Control. Available from Angel Air

RCA
VICTOR
ANDROMEDA

03 andromeda

day of the change

Spooked pre-prog madrigal with odd overtones of Hot Chocolate's Every 1's A Winner, Day Of The Change encapsulates the promise of Andromeda's self-titled 1969 debut album, a flash of distant light before mainman John Du Cann split for Atomic Rooster. Change was indeed "at hand".

(Du Cann) Published by CeeDee Music UK. ℗&©Angel Air Records 2000. ISRC code GBHMX0205302. Taken from the album *Definitive Collection* 2CD set. Angel Air Records www.angelair.co.uk

04 episode six

mr universe

Pre-Deep Purple, Ian Gillan and Roger Glover were in Episode Six, the former unleashing his *sui generis* combo of Ur-screech and theatrical diction in this never-dull 1968 slice of panto-psych. It was later revived by the singer in his post-Purple hard rock project Gillan, doubtless inspired by the recruitment of ex-Episode Six drummer Mick Underwood.

(Gillan, Glover) Published by Peermusic (UK) Ltd ℗1968 Chapter One Records licensed courtesy of Cherry Red Records Ltd

THE ATTACK
MAGIC IN THE AIR

09 the attack

magic in the air

Originally intended as the A-side to the London freakbeaters' fourth single, Magic was rejected by their label, Decca, on the grounds that it was too damn heavy, and replaced with the toytown psych oddity, Neville Thumbcatch. Who knows what the fate of the group might have been if this frazzle-riffed monster had crept out instead?

(Du Cann) Published by CeeDee Music UK. ℗&©Angel Air Records2001. ISRC code GBHMX0208001. Taken from the album *Final Daze*. Angel Air Records www.angelair.co.uk

BLONDE ON BLONDE
CASTLES IN THE SKY

10 blonde on blonde

heart without a home

Formed in Newport in 1967, these heavy Welsh heads, veterans of Middle Earth and Isle Of Wight, had hit their stride with 1970's *Rebirth* album. One of the highlights is this third-eye-dilating groove-a-thon, with singer David Thomas yearning for a place a freak can be free while drums lope inexorably and guitars fizz and moil. Lumpy in the best way possible!

(Johnson) Peermusic (UK) Ltd ℗1970 Cherry Red Records Ltd

11 the alan bown!

all along the watchtower

This standout track from the *Outward Bown* LP is a perfect showcase for the switched-on, revamped Alan Bown Set, with Jess Roden on vocals and Tony Catchpole on guitar, turning Dylan's chilly apocalyptic parable into a psych-soul freakout, a live staple which reputedly inspired Hendrix's own Jan '68 recording.

(Dylan) B Feldman & Co Ltd ℗1968 Alan Bown & Jeff Bannister licensed courtesy of Cherry Red Records Ltd

JACKIE LOMAX
Sour Milk Sea

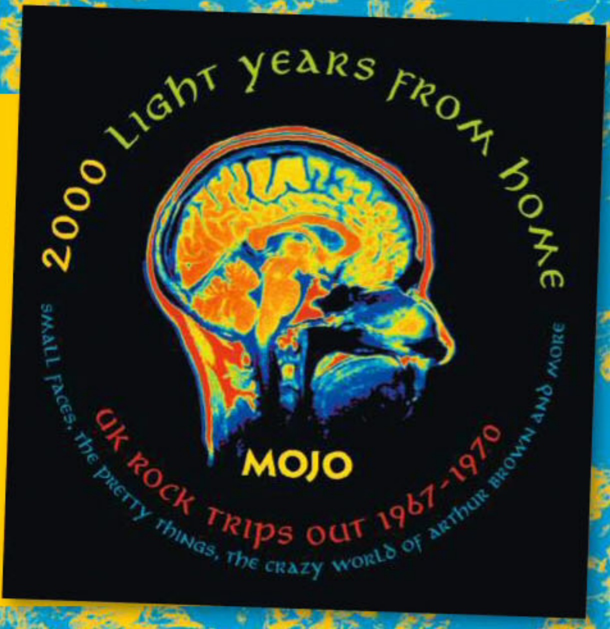
12 the lomax alliance

see the people

Beatle George's Wirral pal Jackie Lomax's post-Undertakers outfit released one single on CBS in 1967. This was the charming B-side, penned by bassist John Peters and guitarist John Cannon, like a schoolyard chant gone psych. Brian Epstein took them under his wing, then promptly died, presaging much 'nearly but not quite' for Lomax, despite Harrison's continuing patronage.

(J. Cannon, T. Peters) Courtesy of Goldenlane Records, a division of @CleopatraRecord, Inc.

THE IMPACT OF PSYCHEDELICS ON BRITISH POP AND rock wasn't restricted to the inner circle of actual LSD initiates. Psych was a watershed that produced all kinds of responses, from the charmingly childlike to the genuinely bananas. Bands *went* psych, it was *de rigueur*, and whether they continued down the path to third-eye dilation, returned to their roots, or used psych as a bridge to somewhere else, the idea of pop music seeking types of transcendence was established and set the tone for much that was to come. 1967 to 1970: this collection's timespan is deliberately broad. Like the Stones on *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, some of groups from '67 and '68 were catching up with the trailblazers – The Beatles mainly. After that, they were on their own – some reaching for heaviness, like Blonde On Blonde on their stomping Heart Without A Home, some towards jazz and prog like Bobak, Jons, Malone, and others (well, Arthur Brown) to Planet Strange. A trip for everyone? We hope so.


2000 Light Years From Home
UK Rock Trips Out 1967-1970
MOJO
Small Faces, The Pretty Things, The Crazy World of Arthur Brown and more

05 The Pretty Things

She Says Good Morning

The third "chapter" from the former R&B bruisers' 1968 psych opera, *S.F. Sorrow*, might borrow shamelessly from The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper* but it adds its own garage filth and urchin sneer to this tale of our titular hero, Sorrow, and his brief romance with the girl across the street. Rambunctious.

(May, Taylor, Waller, Alder) published by Lupus Music Company Ltd ℗&© Snapper Music Ltd 1968, from the album *S.F. Sorrow* http://www.lupus-music.com/

motherlight
bobak, jons, malone

06 Bobak, Jons, Malone

On A Meadow Lea

A gorgeous 1970 studio creation from recording engineers Mike Bobak and Andy Johns with former Orange Bicycle guitarist/keyboardist/singer Wil Malone, this acid-fried orch-prog reverie has shades of The Zombies and Curt Boettcher but with just enough brown acid ripples to make matters unsettling.

(Malone) Published by Morgan Music Co. Ltd/Maxwood Music Ltd. From the album *Motherlight* www.secretrecordslimited.com

07 Sadie's Expression

Yesterday Was Such A Lovely Day (Elsie)

Formerly The Troggs (a different Troggs!) and Expression, in 1968 these Essex hopefuls fell in with producer Peter Eden and cut this exquisite, celeste-adorned, melancholic haze at Decca, though it wasn't released at the time. Sounds unspeakably sad in a way you can't place? That's because it was written by Bill Fay.

(Fay) Published by Carlin Music Corp ℗2000 Cherry Red Records Ltd

08 Pussy

The Open Ground

They began as Herts R&B trio The Creepers, then acid-tweaked offshoot We Shake Milk before forming deep-psych five-piece Pussy with guitarist Barry Clark and keyboardist Peter Whiteman. On The Open Ground, the group's lysergic blend of UK Kaleidoscope feyness, Floyd fairytale and distant Yardbirds riffs turns weird with drummer Steve Townsend's nightmarish narration.

Published by Maxwood Music Ltd. From the album *Pussy Plays* www.secretrecordslimited.com

13 The Mickey Finn

Time To Start Loving You

From Mod to quasi-psych, East London's The Mickey Finn had it covered, lending homegrown grit to CBS's Direction, a label best known for licensing US R&B. This monster rave-up was the B-side to '67 single Garden Of My Mind, the excellent Alan Marks roaring like a baritone Steve Marriott. No need for Jimmy Page's help *here*.

(Jory, Mark, Waller) Copyright Control ℗1967 The Mickey Finn licensed courtesy of Cherry Red Records Ltd

14 The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown

The Lord Doesn't Want You

Recorded late 1969, in Dorset's Jabberwocky Studios, this is the astonishing sound of Brown ditching Fire's hit formula for gibbering free-funk anti-gospel. Backed by Beefheart devotee drummer Drachen Theaker, it's truly *Trout Mask* weird and wasn't officially released until 1988.

(Brown, Mitchell, Funnel, Khan, Theaker, Taylor) Copyright Control ℗1988 Cherry Red Records Ltd

15 Andy Ellison

You Can't Do That

The ex-John's Children singer with a languid, 1968 reading of the Fabs' *A Hard Day's Night* kiss-off, rather indebted to the version on Nilsson's *Pandemonium Shadow Show* from the previous year. Knowingly lounge with fruity female call-and-response backing vox – it's like someone spiked the punch at Peter Sellers' The Party (also '68) and watched the revellers unravel.

(Lennon, McCartney) Sony/ATV Music Publishing (UK) Ltd ℗2013 Andy Ellison licensed courtesy of Cherry Red Records Ltd

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TURN TO P76

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2/2 Omeara - London, UK
3/2 Doornroosje - Nijmegen, NL
4/2 Americana Rising - Hilversum, NL
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14/2 John Dee - Oslo, NO

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20/4 Deaf Institute - Manchester, UK
21/4 King Tut's - Glasgow, UK
22/4 Brudenell Social Club - Leeds, UK
24/4 Portland Arms - Cambridge, UK
25/4 The Lantern - Bristol, UK

GRANT-LEE PHILLIPS

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grantleephillips.com

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Shania Twain

COUNTRY POP QUEEN

What music are you currently grooving to?

A variety of things – **Twenty Øne Piløts**, **Meghan Trainor**, **Nick Jonas**, **Chris Stapleton**. I'm a sucker for a great Top 40 song. And I love **Glen Campbell** and **Emmylou Harris** too.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*. I'm a big fan of groups, for the diversity it brings. And all the songs are incredible. When I was a kid listening to it, I was just in love with the music, it wasn't until later that I realised all of the drama that had been going on.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

Gee, I think it was Knowing Me, Knowing You by **Abba**, from a little record store in a strip mall in Sudbury, which is a medium-sized town in northern Ontario.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

I always said if I was a male musician I would want to be Glen Campbell. He was brilliant, a very underrated vocalist – the range and control of his voice is just perfection, I think. My favourite song of his, vocally, is Little Altar Boy, a Christmas song.

What do you sing in the shower?

I don't, but if I did I'd probably pick something that was out of my range, like **Ariana Grande**.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Bee Gees' *Saturday Night Fever* – ideal party music.

And your Sunday morning record?

If I'm going to the stables to groom and feed the horses, I'll put Top 40 radio on. Also, to me, the best horse grooming music – and I don't know if it calms them or whatever – is **Etta James**. If I was going to pick a favourite genre it would be soul – **Gladys Knight**, **The Staple Singers** – and bluegrass, which I sort of see as white soul. Those really work great in the stable too.

ALL BACK TO MY PLACE

IN WHICH THE STARS REVEAL THE SONIC DELIGHTS GUARANTEED TO GET THEM GOING...

Dave Hill

SLADE'S ONCE AND FUTURE SUPERYOB.

What music are you currently grooving to?

Lindsey Buckingham and **Christine McVie**'s album – a really great record. I told [Slade drummer] **Don Powell**, if they had **Stevie Nicks** on it it'd be a **Fleetwood Mac** LP! But 'grooving to' can be an awful lot of subjects for me, because of my vast tastes… maybe I'll listen to Radio 2 or 6Music, maybe La Grange by **ZZ Top**, and I'm a big fan of **Glenn Miller** and big bands.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

The Beatles' *1* album – all the Number 1s! Uplifting, brilliant music. And if it not a greatest hits, *Rubber Soul*.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

Smoke Gets In Your Eyes by **The Platters**, from Woolworths. I fell in love with a girl, I was only 10. I'd play it thinking about going to her house and asking her for a date.

Which musician other than yourself have you ever wanted to be?

It must be nice to be **George Harrison** or **Hank Marvin**, but at the end of the day, being me was the best option.

What do you sing in the shower?

Crying In The Rain by **The Everly Brothers**, as the girl above wouldn't go out with me because I had big ears! They called me 'FA Cup'…

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

The Drifters' Saturday Night At The Movies. It reminds me of going to the cinema and watching Doris Day. I'm usually working though, I could be anywhere – I mean, we're absolutely huge in Russia – and after, I'll go straight to bed because I'm one of those that doesn't drink.

And your Sunday morning record?

The Shadows' *Greatest Hits*. They were a huge influence on my playing. Or you could put Steve Wright on and listen to Sunday Love Songs. Or sometimes I'll listen to **Slade** things, to remind myself what I played. Everything's memories isn't it?

Dave Hill's memoir So Here It Is is published by Unbound (£20)

Getty Images, Mert And Marcus

LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM
CHRISTINE McVIE

NOW PLAYING

- A-ha! Shania Twain's first 45 bought with her own money was Abba's 1976 classic of uplifting breakup, Knowing Me, Knowing You.
- Dave Hill is, right this minute, grooving to Lindsey Buckingham and Christine McVie's collaborative LP from June 2017.
- Paul Gambaccini's first LP, meanwhile, was a Creed Taylor-produced wild organ-playing opus from 1962, *Bashin': The Unpredictable Jimmy Smith*.

Paul Gambaccini

RADIO'S PROFESSOR OF POP

What music are you currently grooving to?

As we look back, my favourite rock track of the year is Feel It Still by **Portugal. The Man**. My favourite country star is **Kane Brown**, and my favourite R&B artist of the year is **Khalid**. And **Beethoven** and Motown, **The Beatles** and the **Stones**.

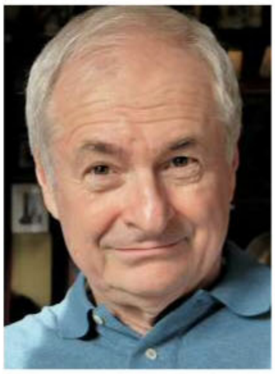
What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Revolver. It's a miracle, the ultimate example of how a group can respect each other's strengths while still working in unity. Tomorrow Never Knows, it was as if The Beatles said, "And coming next year, psychedelia."

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

The first one I made my parents buy was *West Side Story* by **Ferrante & Teicher**. But the first record I bought was **Jimmy Smith**'s *Bashin'*, for the six-minute version of Walk On The Wild Side, in 1962. It was from the Factory Store in Norwalk, Connecticut. My mother drove me there.

Which musician have you ever wanted to be?



I haven't, but if I did, it would **Ray Charles**.

What do you sing in the shower?

I don't, but if I did, the first few seconds of **The Temptations**' All I Need is the ultimate 'up' phrase of music.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Since 1975 I've had radio shows, so Saturdays I'll have dinner with a friend. I never listen to music while I eat. Music is too important to be a background activity.

And your Sunday morning record?

Johnny Cash, Sunday Morning Coming Down. He really conveys that feeling of a Sunday morning after you've done too much of Saturday night.

See Paul's An Evening With The Great Gambo – The Professor Of Pop at UK theatres from April 6.

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AT THE DAWN OF THE 1980s, MY FAMILY – EVER ON THE AUDIO CUTting edge – acquired a second-hand Stereo Radiogram: a vast timber coffin with a three-speed record deck, tuner, speakers and space for keeping your vinyl. Inside, once we'd heaved open the lid, we found a stack of vinyl 45s, including an original Purple Haze, a Paperback Writer, Happy Jack, Autumn Almanac, Mellow Yellow – as good an introduction to the thrills of 1966/1967 as an ignorant 12-year-old could wish for, and perhaps the first step on the path that led me here today.

More beguiling still were a couple of flimsy, floppy flexi-discs – sleeveless, I later rued: The Beatles' Christmas messages to their fan club, 1963 and 1964. Once I'd worked out how to play the things, I loved these intimate downloads of Beatle irreverence, the missing link between their music and the film personae I'd lapped up off the telly. So I'm especially pleased, some decades later, to present the fascinating story of these cherished recordings and their successors, 1965-69 (see page 46), amongst the plethora of lovingly crafted articles in this issue. Think of it as a Christmas gift to you, MOJO's readers, or, more truthfully, for its Acting Editor's inner 12-year-old. Happy holidays!

Danny

DANNY ECCLESTON, ACTING EDITOR

Because they're not organised

As a long time MOJO reader I was pleased to read the wonderful five-star review you gave to our documentary film BANG! The Bert Berns Story in MOJO 290. Unfortunately, you failed to mention my credit as director along with Brett Berns. Brett and I co-directed the film together and share the director's credit. I was also the film's editor, working closely with my film-making partner Christina Keating, who also served as one of the film's producers.

Bert Berns helped create some of the greatest music of his generation. We are thrilled at the overwhelmingly positive response audiences have had for our film, and proud to be able raise Berns's profile so that he will get the long overdue recognition that he deserves. The film is now available world-wide via iTunes.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to set the record straight.

Best regards,

Bob Sarles, Ravin' Films, Inc., San Francisco, USA

Yes, pop art seduction

Just one quibble with Gary Lucas in his Captain Beefheart Hello Goodbye in MOJO 290. Don Van Vliet did not "decide" to paint in '82. Don was painting before he was making music and if you look closely at his artwork, as I have done (I've even tried to buy some at times), you can see a direct link to the music and a direct link to his roots in the Mojave.

Having said that, as a fan who bought *Safe As Milk* first time round and most stuff in between, I always valued Gary's contributions. I have been a MOJO reader since issue one and it always gives my heart a lift if I see Captain Beefheart on the cover. He was a unique and inspiring individual; maybe a real in-depth piece is in order, as a few of the original band are still alive.

Patrick Hillard, Kings Lynn

It's a bit different for him, being a singer

On tour here in Leeds, I picked up MOJO 290. In Last Night A Record Changed, My Life Jose Feliciano chatted about Bob Dylan's second record, *The Freewheelin'*… and closed by saying, "And Dylan was the guy who turned The Beatles onto grass, remember! That's important." Indeed.

So, a few years ago, I'm sitting across from my old friend, mentor, and songwriting partner, the 84-year-old Canadian Ian Tyson, who wrote Four Strong Winds, Someday Soon, and dozens of other folk classics. I told him that Dylan's first Village love, Suze Rotolo, claimed Ian had turned Bob Dylan onto marijuana in her book, The Freewheelin' Time: A Memoir Of Greenwich Village in the 1960s.

Ian frowned and said, "I don't recall that."

I countered with: "Ian, if you turned Bob Dylan onto grass, and he turned The Beatles on, and they created *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, then you're a cultural icon!"

He considered that for a moment, then said: "Yeah, I guess I did turn Dylan onto weed."

Later, Ian was filmed making claim to that in a CBC TV flick, when someone asked him, "Tell us something you've never revealed before." You can find it on YouTube.

There's another great story Ian told me about Dylan walking into the Kettle Of Fish bar in the Village in 1962 and bumming a cigarette off of Ian, then singing him the freshly-composed Blowin' In The Wind.

Ian said, "Shit, I can do that," and went back to the hotel and wrote Four Strong Winds, the most popular song ever written by a Canadian, and a hit for dozens of folks, including Neil Young. The royalties bought Ian his ranch in Alberta.

Tom Russell, in Leeds, on tour with Folk Hotel, (out on Proper Records in Europe and Frontera Records in North America).

They themselves are violent

I'm a regular buyer of MOJO for many years, and I love it all. Your articles are always well researched and informative.

Because Denmark is not often mentioned in MOJO, can I elaborate a bit on MOJO 289's feature on The Yardbirds becoming Led Zeppelin, because I was there at the time.

I travelled with Danish rock groups and was a member of the Brøndby Pop Club from January 1967 to April 1970. We were always backstage and met the cream of this fantastic period's musicians. The Yardbirds played the club on April 15, 1967. I loved Keith Relf and Jeff Beck, but he was replaced by Jimmy Page! No big loss – it was a fantastic performance, I believe, bow and all!

Jeff Beck later played the club at other times – including a Rod Stewart (almost) premiere. Jethro Tull also premiered there, and on September 7, 1968, The New Yardbirds played Brøndby Pop Club, and this is mentioned as the first 'Led Zeppelin' show. It was in Denmark! Brøndby Pop Club!

I lived in a community with the chief booker in the club, Bent 'Stoffer' Christoffersen, and he had already checked them out in a club in Denmark's Gladsaxe commune, before this date. He was totally struck. But OK! Anyway, their musicianship and showmanship was unparalleled, we loved them. On March 15, 1969, the newly-named Led Zeppelin played Brøndby Pop Club again (they were paid Dkr6100/£700 at the time!!!). They blew the roof off, but Keef Hartley was also good.

Then we freaks were invited to be the audience for a TV-concert in DR's studios (it's on DVD). Those were the best times. Then was the best music. These are the best memories.

Lars Steen Andersen, Denmark

The right pitch of emotion

I'm writing this while convalescing from a gastric 'flu virus in Riyadh, one of the more joyless cities of the world. To pass the time I'm reading edition 289 of MOJO, my favourite music monthly. Courtney Barnett & Kurt Vile's collaboration *Lotta Sea Lice* is on the stereo, as per your main LP feature, and it's currently rocking my world – another great recommendation.

Next up is something from the back catalogue, That Petrol Emotion's debut LP from 1986, the inspiringly titled (and oft-misquoted) *Manic Pop Thrill*, which last year received a Record Store Day re-release by Demon Records on double 10-inch orange vinyl. A true treasure to cherish. Which got me thinking…

A MOJO article on Derry's very own guitar-shredding O'Neill brothers (John and the eternally youthful Damian) is long overdue. The O'Neill brothers' twin guitar onslaught powered The Undertones, and later That Petrol Emotion. Damian played propulsive bass on their first three LPs, the aforementioned *Manic Pop Thrill*, followed by 1987's blistering *Babble* and 1988's experimental dance-inspired crossover (and inspiringly titled) *End Of The Millennium Psychosis Blues*, which was to be John's last with the group.

The O'Neill brothers have played together on some wonderful records, including The Undertones' Teenage Kicks and That Petrol Emotion's nearly-hit Big Decision. Their twin guitars, when they lock together, are a thing of rare aural joy. Surely a MOJO article is long overdue…

Gareth Knight MBE, via e-mail

A mess of cultural pottage

I appreciated the long overdue feature on Taj Mahal in MOJO 288. I've had the sense that he's often been overlooked because of his sheer eclecticism and willingness to work in so many different genres.

I was hoping, however, for a few paragraphs on Taj's participation in the Great American String Band with Jerry Garcia, Maria Muldaur, David Grisman, Richard Greene, and David Nichtern. They played a half dozen or so shows up and down the California coast in the spring and early summer of 1974. Their story doesn't appear much in biographies of Garcia or the Grateful Dead, and I've wondered how they came to be and why they didn't continue. Bootleg recordings from those shows sure sound like they were a lot fun.

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WHAT GOES

HURRY UPARI

SLITS RE-CUT!

The punk trailblazers supreme get the docu-film they've always deserved – Here To Be Heard.

2018 PREVIEW FILMS

"The frustrating thing for me was continually being told, 'You can't play'," says Slits' bassist Tessa Pollitt. "It happened to me just the other day in a record shop in Camden. This guy said to me, 'But you couldn't play, could you?' It goes on and on and it's only really because we were girls."

"And, it's not understanding the beauty of punk," adds Paloma McLardy, AKA Palmolive, The Slits' Spanish-born drummer. She's just flown from Massachusetts for the BFI London Film Festival premiere of a film about the band, Here To Be Heard: The Story Of The Slits, out in March.

"It's like when I look at children's pictures," says Paloma. "Someone who knows how to draw cannot put in a picture what a kid can. The Slits were those kids: Oh, this sounds nice with this… We were experimenting, and having fun in the process."

The pair are together for the first time in many years along with the film's director, William Badgley, who makes thoughtful interjections but mostly listens as the two women laugh, reminisce and rage together as if they'd never been apart.

Badgley's film takes a similarly non-invasive approach. It doesn't attempt to analyse or explain The Slits in a sociopolitical context. Rather, it is the latest essential step in the on-going corrective to the band's marginalisation in punk history. Here To Be Heard, Badgley says, is The Slits telling their own story, via interviews with the band: Ari Up, Viv Albertine, Palmolive and Pollitt (whose '70s scrap book is a revelation). Original guitarist Kate Korus and later drummers Bruce Smith (The Pop Group/PiL) and the Banshees' Budgie, as well as the 2005 Slits reformation line-up, are also interviewed.

Vivid archive footage and astute commentary from Don Letts, writer Vivien Goldman, producer Dennis Bovell, the Pistols' Paul Cook and The Raincoats' Gina Birch account for half the story, while the rest is told by Ari, whose documenting of the band's US tour in 2005 was the catalyst for the film. Slits tour manager Jennifer Shagawat took hours of footage that was eventually handed over to Badgley. Ari appears by turns wild, funny, maniacal and reflective, her determined belief in the future of The Slits taking on a particular poignancy after her 2010 death.

For Pollitt and Paloma, reliving The Slits has been positive. As for Ari, Tessa smiles, "she would have carried on being bonkers for ever." They also have a message to the doubters. "My answer is to listen to the records!" she laughs. "Yes, we played on the records. It wasn't the producer, it was us!"

Jenny Bulley

To pre-order go to: pledgemusic.com/projects/the-slits-here-to-be-heard

"WE WERE EXPERIMENTING, AND HAVING FUN IN THE PROCESS."
Palmolive

And the winners are… The Slits (from left) Tessa Pollitt, Palmolive, Viv Albertine, Ari Up; (below, from left) Pollitt, director William Badgley, Palmolive in London, October, 2017.

Pennie Smith, Vittorio Zunino Celotto/Getty Images for BFI

ON!

THE HOT NEWS AND
BIZARRE STORIES
FROM PLANET **MOJO**

MORE 2018 BOWIE IN BERLIN, JACKSON C.FRANK AND MORE MUSIC ON FILM ACTION…

2018 PREVIEW FILMS

More documentaries, dramatisations and dissections that you will be watching…

1 HANSA STUDIOS 1976-90: BY THE WALL

Director: Mike Christie

Via Sky Arts from January, a portrait of the studio located in the divided Berlin's western enclave until the fall of communism. As well as playing host to Bowie and Brian Eno when they recorded *Low* and *"Heroes"* in 1977, it also provided a creative haven for Iggy Pop, Depeche Mode, Nick Cave, U2 and more. Utilising the studio's archives and employees' recollections, interviewees include Michael Stipe, Martin Gore, Mick Harvey, Bono, Tony Visconti and Bowie's glamorous pal Romy Haag.

They Say: "Is the spirit of the people who recorded these fantastic, life-altering songs imbued in the grain of the fabric of the place? Maybe." (Michael Stipe)

2 ENNIO MORRICONE: THE GLANCE OF MUSIC

Director: Giuseppe Tornatore

The director has worked with Morricone for 30 years, and here he talks to Il Maestro about his life and work, with additional comments from admirers including Bruce Springsteen, Dario Argento and Joan Baez. The finished version will also feature dramatised passages.

They Say: "A film is what we see or hear, but music represents the unsaid and unseen." (Ennio Morricone)

3 JACKSON C. FRANK: BLUES RUN THE GAME

Directors: Damien Aimé Dupont

Best known for his 1965 solo LP and its often-covered standout Blues Run The Game, Buffalo-born singer-songwriter Frank's life was scarred by tragedy. With interviewees include Wizz Jones and the late John Renbourn, this film attempts to "unknot the threads" of his enigma.

They Say: "Where to find meaning, or even light, in a life as dark as his?"

4 STEEL PULSE: DREADTOWN – A FILM ABOUT MUSIC & REVOLUTION

Director: Yoni Gal

As the Brum reggae institutions celebrate 40 years since debut *Handsworth Revolution*, admirers including Rita Marley and Snoop Lion pay tribute. This full-access doc is filmed in the US, Africa and Haiti; Danny Glover narrates.

They Say: "[It's] our trials and tribulations… we don't want to leave any stone unturned." (David Hinds)

5 CREATION STORIES

Director: Nick Moran

Scripted by Irvine Welsh, this adaption of Alan McGee's 2013 memoir of the same name stars Ewan Bremner (AKA's Trainspotting's Spud) as the Creation records chief. Brian Cox and Hugh Grant also star, though there's no word on who'll be playing Oasis, MBV or The Jazz Butcher.

They Say: "It's a story of relentless ambition; mental torment; drugs; bankruptcy; unfathomable wealth."

ALSOFILMING

…**GEORGE AND TAMMY**, directed by Taylor Hackford, stars **Josh Brolin** and **Jessica Chastain** as George Jones and Tammy Wynette for a tragic love story that's going to be tricky to sugarcoat… **I'VE GOT LEVITATION**, directed by James Oswald and Jack Henry Robbins, centres on the 50th anniversary reunion of **The 13th Floor Elevators** (vocalist Roky Erickson, right) at the Levitation Festival in Austin in 2015. **Sean Lennon**, **Wayne Coyne** and **The JAMC** all contribute…

Dionne Warwick doc **DON'T MAKE ME OVER** is co-directed by Dave Wooley and David Heilbroner, and will trace her rise to fame, with testimony from **Quincy Jones**, **Burt Bacharach**, **Gladys Knight**, **Smokey Robinson** and ex-President **Bill Clinton**… **BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY**, the long-promised bio-pic of **Queen** from formation until 1985's Live Aid performance, arrives on Christmas Day 2018. **Rami Malek** stars as **Freddie Mercury**, Bryan Singer directs…

Alysse Gafkjen, Getty Images, Alamy, urbanimage.tv

NASHVILLESCREAM

SHANNON SHAW BARES HER SOUL

Oakland powerhouse voice lauded by Dan Auerbach channels *Dusty In Memphis.*

2018 PREVIEW NEW FACE

Among imminent releases from Easy Eye Sound, the studio/label run by Black Key Dan Auerbach, two are set to introduce an explosive female voice to the wider world. Shannon Shaw, from Oakland, California, has made four no-budget albums with her combo Shannon & The Clams, who have been tagged as Etta James meets The Shangri-Las. Auerbach describes them as "the best nowadays-version of girl-group slash garage music I've ever heard".

Her journey to music was circuitous, though. "I grew up Mormon," she says. "It was pretty strict on what we listened to." As a teen in smalltown Napa, she discovered punk, but the idea of performing came gradually via a series of epiphanies: seeing the trashy girl band in movie Desperate Teenage Love Dolls; finding she could karaoke sing Roy Orbison; "a life-changing break-up" while at art college in Oakland. It all prompted her to unload pain via songwriting, aged 24.

After a meeting in San Francisco, Auerbach invited Shaw to Easy Eye in Nashville. On arrival in early 2017, though, she "had a meltdown, just trying to pretend I was OK jamming with celebrities," especially once he ushered in songwriter Pat McLaughlin, and pianist Bobby Wood, who in the late '60s backed legends on, among others, *From Elvis In Memphis and Dusty In Memphis*.

Then, she says, "it was like lightning striking me – 'No, fuck that, you're here because you have something they *don't* have.' Then this other version of myself bubbled up."

The resultant LP's title, *Shannon In Nashville*, gives a tongue-in-cheek nod to those '60s classics, but it's similarly packed with epic songs and lavish orchestrations placing her centre-stage.

"THIS OTHER VERSION OF MYSELF BUBBLED UP."
Shannon Shaw

Enthuses Auerbach, "Shannon is able to be soft and heart-breaking, then all of a sudden scream like Glenn Danzig. So I had to be prepared to use that weapon just right."

Both parties were so bowled over that within a few months, Shaw returned to Easy Eye to cut another album with The Clams.

So, with this double whammy ready to roll, Shaw's star is certain to ascend dramatically in 2018. Amid another gale of laughter, the colourful alt-diva-in-waiting confides, "My only plan is, I know I need a better plan."

Give it six months, and all lingering traces of indie under-achievement will be gone.

Andrew Perry

Shannon And The Clams' Onion will be released on Easy Eye Sound/Nonesuch in February. Shannon Shaw's …In Nashville will follow in May.

She's got an Easy Eye on you: Shannon Shaw, from Mormonism to garage girl to emotions orchestral. Below left, onstage with The Clams.

FACT SHEET

- For fans of: Dusty Springfield, Lulu, Etta James, Glenn Danzig.
- Introducing the Clams at Oakland's Burger Boogaloo '16, director John Waters adoringly described them as "The Mamas & The Papas of cult dancehalls everywhere", singling out Shannon as "prettier than Kim Novak to me".
- Shaw also plays in scuzzy bubblegum group Hunx And His Punx, with queercore face Seth Bogart.

KEY TRACKS

- Freddies N Teddies (off *In Nashville*)
- Cryin' My Eyes Out (off *In Nashville*)
- I Never Wanted Love (off *Onion*)

FACT SHEET

Title: TBC
Due: Spring, 2018
Production: Tony Visconti
Songs: Procrastination, We're So Nice, Shadow Evocation, Evil Spirits, Standing On The Edge Of Tomorrow
The Buzz: "I didn't want to end up just playing the old hits, I wanted to write some new ones. I'd like to bombard the world with Damned songs until they're sick of us." *Dave Vanian*

LOVESONGS?

THE DAMNED'S PSYCH REBIRTH!

The English punk institution breaks a decade of silence, with Tony Visconti!

For The Damned, the last two years have involved much retrospection, with 40th anniversary touring, reissues and even a talk at the British Library focusing on punk and their place in it. "People love to see us live," muses vocalist Dave Vanian, "but it's like performing the same play over and over. And it's been such a long time since The Damned have made an album…"

Ten years, to be precise, since the release of *So, Who's Paranoid?* To rectify – "I badgered them into it a little bit!" says Vanian – the group entered Atomic Sound in Brooklyn in early October 2017 to make use of its original Neve desk, valve gear and bestiary of vintage instruments and microphones. They had some serious assistance: Bolan/Bowie producer Tony Visconti. "He actually said yes without even hearing anything," says the singer. "In fact, he said, 'Why didn't you ask me a long time ago?'"

Recording was something of a seat-of-pants experience: there are four writers in the group, and when work began, Vanian, guitarist Captain Sensible, keyboardist Monty Oxymoron, drummer Pinch and prodigal bassist Paul Gray had yet to play some of the demo'd songs together. Also, Vanian speaks of doing "a month's worth of recording in nine days, doing 10 hours and two tracks a day." The potential for discord was clear.

Yet it seems there wasn't time to argue. Says Captain Sensible, "It wasn't long before the old magic reappeared. We mainly stuck to arranging our own tunes which – and this always amazes me – took on the Damned sound immediately we gave them a bash."

Vanian describes that sound as, "a mix of all our best bits from *Phantasmagoria* [1985] to *The Black Album* ['80]. Chock full of melody and guitar licks with a lot of '60s psychedelic feel. There's rawness, but anyone looking for out-and-out raucousness and nothing else might not be so happy."

Lyrically, there are references to the uncertain state of global politics and other paranoia-inducing issues – one song relates to the self-beaching of whales and dolphins – but Vanian stresses that they're leavened with positivity: "You've got to have optimism, otherwise we're just drowning in despair!"

Scenes from Atomic Sound, October 2017 (clockwise from top left) Vanian sings; Captain Sensible (left), Tony Visconti; Visconti at the desk; backing vocals; jubilation; The Damned (from left) Monty, Pinch, Paul Gray, Captain, Vanian; Vanian writes.

"IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THE OLD MAGIC REAPPEARED."
Captain Sensible

Steve Gullick (7), Suki Dhanda, Getty Images (2)

The Captain cites Visconti, who mixed the album in November in New York, as a stabilising influence. "He's been there and done it all but is still a nice affable chap to work with. In another life the bloke would've made a decent psychiatrist. His pitch is great too, so we've had him in on a few backing vocal takes."

Visconti's pal/muse Kristeen Young also lends vocal colour. As well as the album's 10 tracks, another 20-odd recordings may emerge later as an EP/download. Forty-two years on from New Rose, it only remains to ask, as one of the original class of '76, do they feel they still have points to prove?

"I don't know about that," says Vanian. "But I still feel we can create good music. You either stop and just play the hits and be a wonderful nostalgia band – 'Oh, wasn't New Rose great?' – or you keep pushing boundaries for yourself. So, we go forward."

Ian Harrison

2018 PREVIEW ALBUMS

"No fucks given": Tracey Thorn tells the world where to get off on album number five.

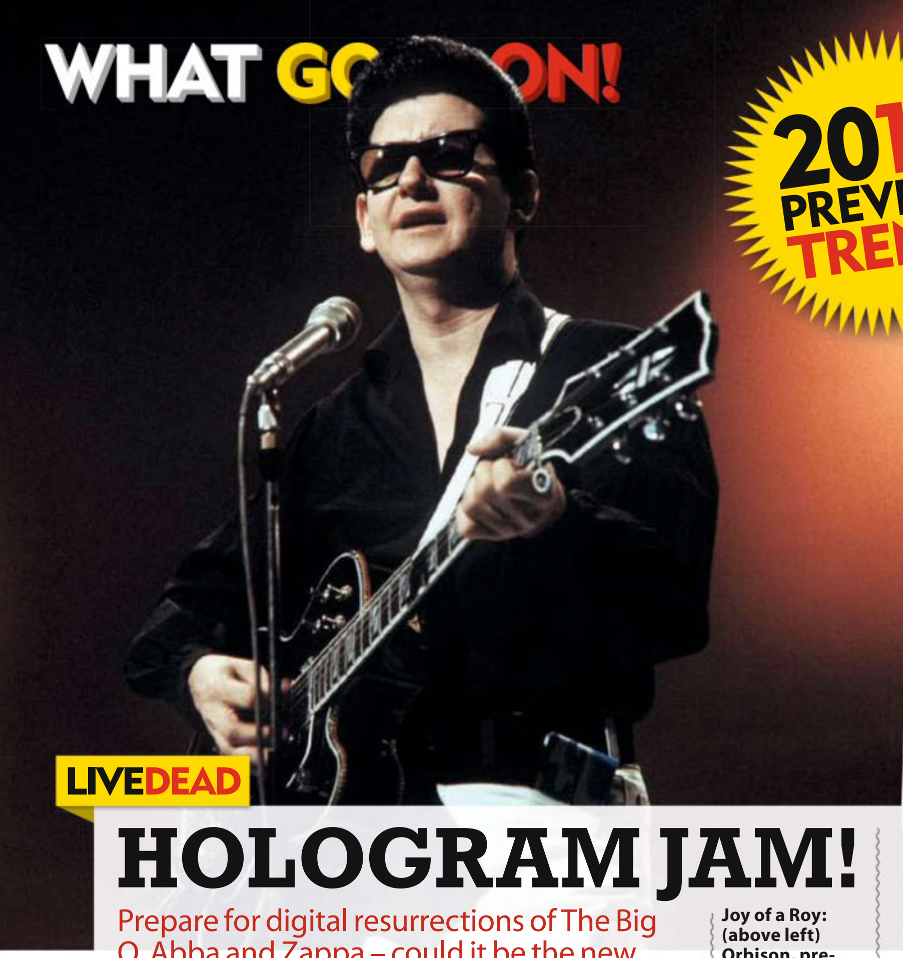
ALSO WORKING

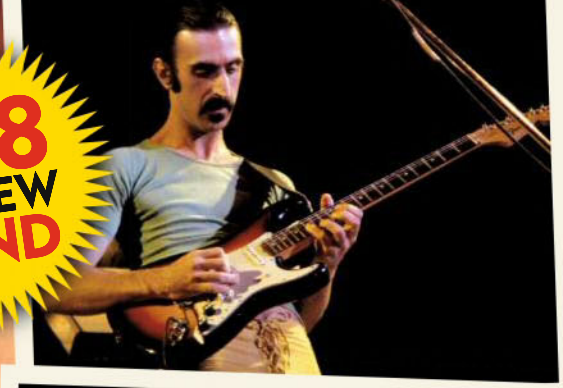
…**PAUL McCARTNEY** continues to work with producer **Greg Kurstin** for a new album due in 2018. A song addressing the Trump question is expected to appear …**LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM** releases a new solo album in April …**TRENT REZNOR**'s working on a new **Nine Inch Nails** LP with co-producer **Atticus Ross**. He says they're finding stimulation in the adventurousness of '70s pop. "We're not finding a lot of inspiration in current music in Top 40 radio," he says. "We're more inspired by what **David Lynch** did with Twin Peaks this year" …**SLEAFORD MODS** are recording album 10. "With these songs, the lyrics move them along," says orator **Jason Williamson**. "It's the real comedy lines that really sell an idea to me" …Produced by **Ewan Pearson**, and recorded with help from **Warpaint** and **Corinne Bailey Rae**, **TRACEY THORN**'s fifth solo album arrives in spring. "If 2010's *Love And Its Opposite* was my mid-life album," she says, "this album represents…a whole new 'no fucks given' phase of life" … **JOHNNY MARR** releases his third solo album in spring. It's co-produced with keyboardist **James Doviak** and is informed by the reflective mental zone he inhabited writing his 2016 memoir Set The Boy Free …A new **SCOTT WALKER** album is expected by the end of 2018. He has previously said his last solo album *Bish Bosch* was the end of a thematic trilogy begun with 1995's *Tilt*, suggesting new vistas may be explored … **RAY DAVIES** is working on second volume of 2017's song-travelogue *Americana*. "It's an homage," says Ray, "relating to my journey as a person…"

It's going to be Fab: '68 Macca looks forward to a new improved *White Album* in 2018.

REISSUED AND IMPROVED

…2018 will see expanded editions of **JOHN LENNON**'s *Imagine* and **THE BEATLES**' *White Album*. The latter's expected to be formulated similarly to last year's *Sgt. Pepper's* reissue, suggesting fascinating outtakes could be included. Regular Fabs remixer **Giles Martin** told the BBC the album was when the group, "started becoming indulgent… there are 70 takes of Sexy Sadie, for instance" …Rough Trade will re-release **SCRITTI POLITTI**'s *Cupid & Psyche 85*, 1988's *Provision* and 1999's *Anomie & Bonhomie* on vinyl, the latter for the first time. Expanded versions will follow… Rough Trade also intend to re-release albums from **IVOR CUTLER**'s back catalogue… **THE DOORS**' 50th anniversary celebrations will continue in 2018 with an augmented stereo/mono version of The Doors' 1967 album *Strange Days*. **THE KINKS** *Are The Village Green Preservation Society* gets a special deluxe reissue this autumn for its 50th anniversary… **THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS**' seven albums, plus extras, will feature in a box set next year… marking 40 years since their first gig, Liverpool neo-psychedelians **THE TEARDROP EXPLODES** get the box set treatment in 2018. Currently it's a nine-disc'er, containing their two LPs, posthumous releases and demos plus live shows and a DVD. A huge **JULIAN COPE** (left) box covering his Island records years which could run to 17 discs is also in the planning stages…





2018 PREVIEW TREND

LIVEDEAD

HOLOGRAM JAM!

Prepare for digital resurrections of The Big O, Abba and Zappa – could it be the new frontier of live entertainment?

Joy of a Roy: (above left) Orbison, pre-holographic rebirth; (top right) Frank Zappa studiously gets on with it; (bottom right) Michael Jackson's 2014 holo-return.

The notion of holographic versions of departed performers has intrigued and concerned music-heads since a virtual Tupac surprised the Coachella festival in 2012. The first full British tour of this sort arrives in April 2018, when Roy Orbison In Dreams – The Hologram Tour begins its 10-city run in Cardiff, with the late singer backed by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Big O's son, Roy Orbison Jr, of family firm Roy's Boys LLC, is confident concert-goers will be impressed. "The Michael Jackson hologram from 2014 was 700 pixels – this is a 4,000-pixel hologram. I knew we had something when they said, 'The show begins: your father walks to the centre of the stage and sings [1961 hit] Only The Lonely.' I almost get goosebumps thinking about it, like it's going to be, I don't know, Darth Vader walking to the stage… you know it's kind of a hologram, but pretty quickly when you hear the music, you forget all that. The important thing is the voice – hearing [1962 45] Running Scared at full volume, in a room with other people. The hologram is the icing on the cake."

The construction of such holograms involves a digitised head and the specially-filmed body of an actor, but more was required to achieve the feel of a live vocal performance. "In some cases, we only had one source," says Roy Jr. "So we used every trick in the book – we used the originals, live takes, outtakes, the re-records Roy did in 1985, in some cases all three or four in one song. That gives it freshness."

> **"WE'VE USED EVERY TRICK IN THE BOOK."**
> **Roy Orbison Jr**

He adds that the experience of seeing someone who is no longer alive on-stage and singing again was affecting. "It's emotional, of course it is. But I think Roy would have loved this. If he was here, it's where he would have been in his career, as an elder statesman. And think what this means for music. Could you imagine seeing Louis Armstrong, Hank Williams, or B.B. King, or The Traveling Wilburys?"

With a recreated Ronnie James Dio having toured Europe in December, there are other major names lined up for holographic returns. Benny Andersson has referred to an Abba hologram stage show, while Prince's sister Tyka Nelson said she would authorise something similar as long as the technology guaranteed "excellent quality". Next year Frank Zappa's avatar and guitar parts will appear on-stage alongside ex-band members including Adrian Belew, Ian Underwood and Steve Vai, in a move that has not delighted Zappa's son Dweezil. An active musician who's played his father's music live for a decade, he has argued that such productions are essentially, "a lip-sync show… an 'actor's' interpretation" and that, "artificial humans promoted as being alive again and going on tour is not only fake but disturbing, in my opinion."

Yet Roy Orbison Jr is certain that the singing hologram will soon be a normal part of the entertainment landscape. "That's where this technology is leading. I'll be in the front row – I'll go and see Frank Zappa, for sure."

For Roy Orbison – In Dreams tour dates see www.royorbison.com

AND FINALLY…BOOKS OF THE YEAR

1 ROGER DALTREY
TITLE TBC

The Who frontman's autobiography arrives in autumn, and promises an anecdote-heavy take on his youth and life in The Who. "I've been lucky enough to live in interesting times," says Roger (below).

2 LAMONT 'U-GOD' HAWKINS
RAW: MY JOURNEY INTO THE WU-TANG

In late 2016, U-God sued his old band for $2.5 million in back royalties. His March memoir promises equal realness, telling his tale from a difficult youth in Staten Island to rap fame.

3 JEFF TWEEDY
TITLE TBC

In November, the Wilco leader's memoir will blend the personal and professional, with Tweedy promising to bring "a window into one person's creative process".

4 IRMIN SCHMIDT AND ROB YOUNG
ALL GATES OPEN: THE BIOGRAPHY OF CAN

Due in May, Germany's greatest group's story is told in two parts: an overview by journalist Young, and a "Symposium" by Can keyboardist Irmin Schmidt.

5 PAUL MORLEY
F*@K 'EM

Scheduled for May, the veteran journalist takes on the life of Tony Wilson Factory records boss. Drawing on his personal history with his subject, interviews with intimates and Wilson's own papers, it promises a portrait of an "inconsistent genius".

6 MOBY
AND THEN IT FELL APART

Out July, the follow-up to 2016's Porcelain finds Moby recalling what happened when *Play* was a massive success in 1999. "If I do a decent job with the book it will be an honest, intimate look at how fame really does damage people," he says.

7 WAYNE KRAMER
THE HARD STUFF

Coming in June, Brother Wayne looks back on Detroit proto-punks the MC5, from mid-'60s origins to '72 collapse, and beyond. Expect "the struggle of an addict and an artist, a rebel with a great tale to tell."

8 BRETT ANDERSON
COAL BLACK MORNINGS

Out in March, the voice of Suede recalls his life until the time his group exploded in 1992: as a youth in Haywards Heath he depicts himself as a "maudlin sort… raised on salad cream and milky tea," suggesting an entertaining tone similar to Morrissey's Autobiography.

Getty Images (2), Rex (2)

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VARIOUS ARTISTS
THE LOBSTER
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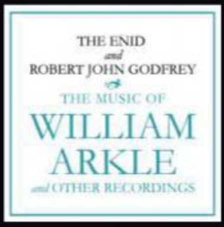


THE ENID & ROBERT JOHN GODFREY
THE MUSIC OF WILLIAM ARKLE
AND OTHER RECORDINGS
INNER SANCTUM CD

DANIEL GADD
AS IF IN A DREAM I DRIFTED AT SEA
107 RECORDINGS CD

WILD EVEL AND THE TRASHBONES
DIGGING MY GRAVE
DIRTY WATER RECORDS LP / CD

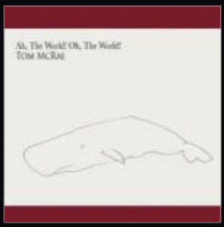
THE DARTS (US)
ME. OW.
DIRTY WATER RECORDS LP / CD

Harry Stafford
guitar shaped hammers

HARRY STAFFORD
GUITAR SHAPED HAMMERS
BLACK LAGOON LP / CD

THE JUST JOANS

THE JUST JOANS
YOU MIGHT BE SMILING NOW…
FIKA RECORDINGS LP / CD



TOM MCRAE
AH, THE WORLD! OH, THE WORLD!
BUZZARD TREE CD

BDY_PRTS
FLY INVISIBLE HERO
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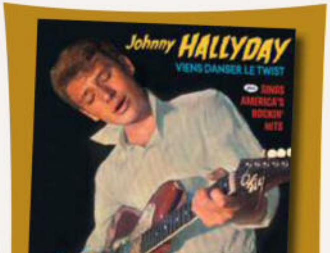

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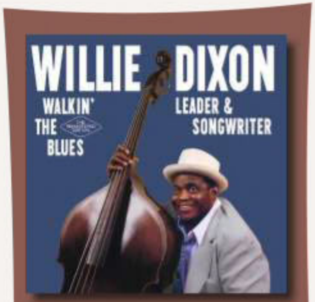

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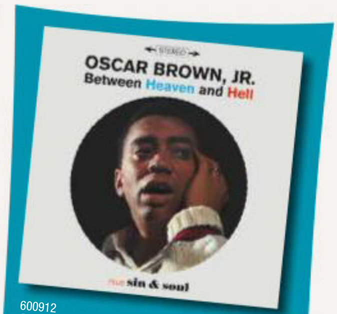

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Both masterpieces are widely regarded as landmark recordings of the early '60s.
This remastered collector's edition also includes 3 bonus tracks from the same period.

Oscar Brown, Jr.'s debut recording, Sin & Soul, is a true classic." — Scott Yanow

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Jones pays his heartfelt tribute to both pioneers.

"You can hear a million imitations on the radio every day – but there was, and ever will be, only one George Jones."– Keith Richards

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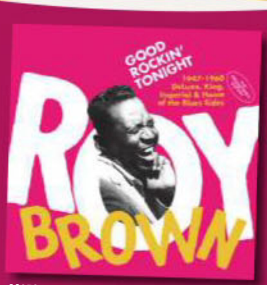

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ROY BROWN
GOOD ROCKIN' TONIGHT
1947-1960 DELUXE, KING, IMPERIAL
& HOME OF THE BLUES SIDES

30 tracks, including a selection of the finest shouters and R&B staples Roy Brown recorded for different labels like DeLuxe, King, Imperial, and Home of the Blues, between 1947 and 1960.

"Roy Brown was my idol!"– B.B. King

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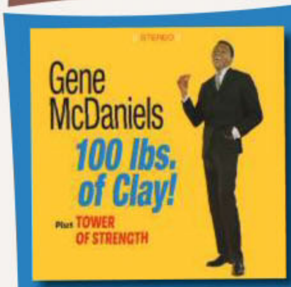

600906
GENE McDANIELS
100 Lbs. OF CLAY!
+ TOWER OF STRENGTH
+ 6 BONUS TRACKS!

Both albums produced by Snuff Garrett. Its respective title songs (the latter co-written by Burt Bacharach) which charted in the Billboard Top-5. In addition, this remastered collectors' edition also includes 6 bonus tracks from the same period.

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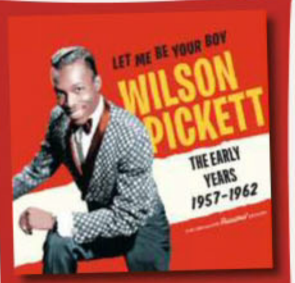

600907
WILSON PICKETT
LET ME BE YOUR BOY
The Early Years, 1957-1962

This collector's edition presents a wide selection of those early recordings Wilson Pickett cut between 1957 and 1962 – as a soloist artist, or with The Falcons, The Violinaires or The Spiritual Five. This material was issued by different small labels such as Correc-Tone, Cub,Double-L and Lupine.

"If You Need Me" was covered by The Rolling Stones.

16 PAGE BOOKLET

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WHAT GOES ON!

MOJO PLAYLIST

Feel your temperature rising? Time for the month's choice of epic rock, fear themes and big-boned jazz.

1 TOM WAITS
HOLD ON

In non-knotty and accommodating guise, Waits picks the golden threads out of the cheap, weary America that's on the run and trying to maintain doomed love affairs, in a small-group arrangement not unlike Time off 1985's *Rain Dogs*. It's from a newly-remastered vinyl and digital edition of 1999's *Mule Variations*, which arrived this month among similarly re-buffed versions of *Real Gone* (2004), *Alice* and *Blood Money* (both 2002), and *Glitter And Doom Live* (2009). The constituent parts of 2006's multi-disc *Orphans: Brawlers, Bawlers & Bastards* will be released separately later in 2018.
Find It: *YouTube*

2 MARLON WILLIAMS WITH ALDOUS HARDING NOBODY GETS WHAT THEY WANT ANYMORE

This Lyttelton, NZ folk hook-up features on Williams's second album, *Make Way For Love* (out in February), pairing his tremulous, bird of paradise baritone with Aldous Harding's resonant gothic spook. Anohni meets The Incredible String Band.
Find It: *Dead Oceans SoundCloud*

3 LINK WRAY SON OF RUMBLE

From the late guitar killer's '50s archives, a mean hand-clapping rhythm, overlaid with fuzzy twang and guitar fatness. But will it provoke delinquent knife fighting? Find out when it's released on 45 by Dan Auerbach's Easy Eye Sound label next April.
Find It: *YouTube*

4 STARCHILD & THE NEW ROMANTIC HANGIN ON

Not new romantic in a 'drawn-in eyebrows at the Blitz club' sense, Maryland's Bryndon Cook is a romantic in the new smooth '80s soul way. His doe-eyed lyrics, honeyed falsetto and glassy keyboard sounds conjuring the silky settings of Jam & Lewis productions on this downbeat taste of his debut album.
Find It: *SoundCloud*

5 JOAN AS POLICE WOMAN WARNING BELL

Shivery soulful ballad from Joan Wasser's forthcoming album *Damned Devotion* reflects on romantic impulsiveness. "I was never good at levitating," she sighs. When the disappointment sounds this lovely, keep swiping right, Joan.
Find It: *SoundCloud*

6 HERBIE HANCOCK WIGGLE-WAGGLE

In these parlous times it is wise to seek out old albums of joyous sounds, hold them close, and praise them for their healing powers. The opening track of the jazz keyboardist's 1970 Warner Bros debut *Fat Albert Rotunda* is one such restorative agency.
Find It: *YouTube*

Waits' rates: (above) Tom in remastering mood; (below) Joan As Police Woman ponders romance.

"I WAS NEVER GOOD AT LEVITATING,' SIGHS JOAN AS POLICE WOMAN."

ROKSAN
MOJO listens to all its music on Roksan equipment

Allison Michael Orenstein

7 DISCHARGE STATE VIOLENCE STATE CONTROL

Brit hardcore pioneers' shatteringly direct political statement from 1982. Sounds like Motörhead guesting on Newsnight.
Find It: *YouTube*

8 KLAUS JOYNSON & THE TYPE 40 FIVE ROUNDS RAPID

A glam rock tribute to the Jon Pertwee era of Doctor Who, from *New Adventures In Time & Space: 12 Songs For 12 Doctors*, where each incarnation of the Time Lord gets a bespoke (synth-pop, Oasis-alike) theme. Nutsy!
Find It: *K.Ultrax CD*

9 THE CULT SHE SELLS SANCTUARY

Pipped to the post in 6Music's Goth World Cup by The Cure's Hanging Garden, The Cult's most robust, silk scarf-draped rock hymn to matriarchal energy in the cosmos (attrib. Ian Astbury).
Find It: *streaming services*

10 PETER MATTHEW BAUER FULL MOON IN THE SKY

Former Walkmen bassist and noted astrologer, PMB channels his esoteric instincts in the service of epic rock transcendence.
Find It: *petermatthewbauer.com*

11 ALICE COLTRANE JOURNEY IN SATCHIDANANDA

Swooping synthesized hymn to Coltrane's Swami, as heard on her recent ashram recordings and in a live tribute in London last month.
Find It: *streaming services*

12 DES DEMONAS THE SOUTH WILL NEVER RISE AGAIN

"You can build a big fucking wall between the US and Mexico but the South will never rise again," deadpans Jacky Cougar, bringing motorik intensity to the song's Farfisa garage groove.
Find It: *Facebook*

13 TIM BUCKLEY DRIFTIN'

This might be Buckley's finest balancing act: a song of remote and fancy beauty that flickers with intimations of madness.
Find It: *YouTube*

14 LYDIA LUNCH & CYPRESS GROVE BREAKDOWN

Lyds gets to the dark heart of Tom Petty's 1976 single. Purring "Something inside you is feeling like I do", as if whatever it is is about to burst through its host's guts.
Find It: *Under The Covers* (RUSTBLADE CD)*/streaming services*

15 NORMIL HAWAIIANS BRITISH WARM

Nine minutes-plus of hypnotic percussive clatter, heavy bass and foreboding vocal intoning from the '80s Brit collective who took post-punk into expansive, Krautrock freakout territory.
Find It: *Upset-the-Rhythm SoundCloud*

16 THE ROGER WEBB ORCHESTRA HAMMER HOUSE OF HORROR

Goblin giallo prog meets the KPM orchestral drama on this 1980 doomy theme for Hammer Films' bizarre and terrifying Sunday evening series.
Find It: *YouTube*

17 NOVAK'S KAPELLE HYPODERMIC NEEDLE

From Numero Group's heavy bad-trip comp *Wayfaring Strangers*, a seedy, brown-toned 1968 Viennese rip-off of The Animals' Inside Looking Out, complete with such dope-buzzed in-translation lyrics as "my heart is beating like a nervous drum-kit".
Find It: *wayfaringstrangers.bandcamp.com/*

18 KAREN BLACK SONG OF SOLOMON

Fans of spectral folk females should hear the songs actress Karen Black performed for Harvey Hart's demonic 1973 thriller The Pyx, highlight being this ethereal Old Testament interpretation.
Find It: *YouTube*

19 JONI WILSON (LET HURT PUT YOU IN THE) LOSER'S SEAT

Later reworked as Parliament's All Your Goodies Are Gone, MOJO rediscovered this after discussion of early George Clinton with ace music scribe Rob Chapman.
Find It: *YouTube*

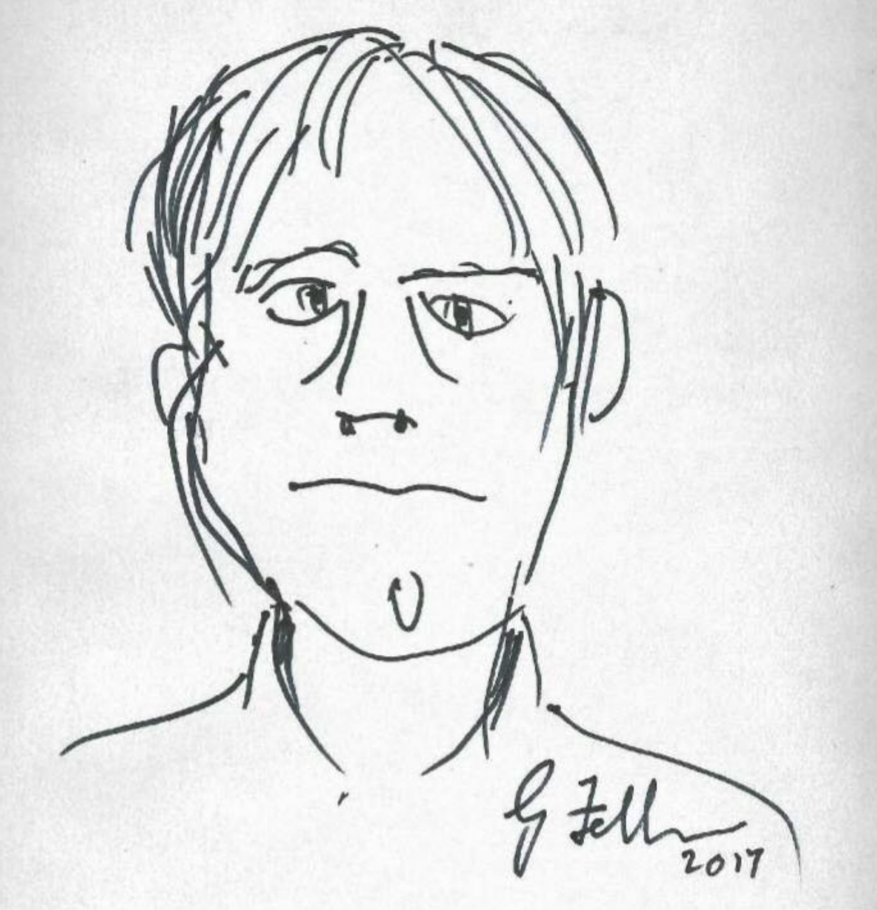
20 LEYLAND KIRBY ROTTEN RAVE TROPES

Comforting hazetronica from the Berlin-based British composer, off his totally free 2017 LP, *We, So Tired Of All The Darkness In Our Lives*. Says Kirby, "I'm as sick of things as you are."
Find It: *https://leylandkirby.bandcamp.com/*

SELFPORTRAIT

GRAHAM FELLOWS

The brain behind Jilted John and John Shuttleworth, in his own words and by his own hand.



Yeah yeah it's not fair: the Gordon Is A Moron bard (below) draws himself (left).

I'd describe myself as… a weird man living in a weird part of a weird town. Which is a reference to a song on my new album, *Weird Town*. It's based on Louth in Lincolnshire where I live. The part of town is where "the 30-mile speed limit starts, and brambles cover discarded prams and old motor parts," the hinterland between countryside and town. I'd like to try and be a little bit weirder because I'm about to embark on a solo tour and I don't want to appear boring. I think I'm still discovering myself, oh God yes. This tour [Completely Out Of Character, where Fellows performs as himself rather than his musical alter-egos] is a voyage of self-discovery as well as being like a sabbatical. And, I don't think I'm an easy man to live with. I don't mind my own company.

Music changed me because… apart from 19th century novels and the odd film like, bizarrely, Mrs. Doubtfire, music is the only thing that reduces me to tears. I used to get quite moved by The Apocalypse in *Yessongs*, particularly the guitar solo. And writing songs takes me to a different place, a slightly more reliable world, perhaps, than the real one, in the same way that listening to music does.

> "I USED TO GET QUITE MOVED BY THE APOCALYPSE IN *YESSONGS*."

When I'm not making music… I like walking and cycling, although recent bouts of sciatica have threatened my ability to do both things, which makes me value them even more.

My biggest vice is… chewing my tongue. I do it when I'm deep in thought, when I think I'm alone. After six months of knowing me my current girlfriend, Miriam, said, "What's that funny squeaking noise I hear when you're on the toilet?" I confessed, "It's me chewing my tongue."

The last time I was embarrassed was… probably when my girlfriend asked me that question.

My formal qualifications are… a diploma in Theatre awarded by Manchester Polytechnic In 1980. I am also a fully qualified Co-op milkman. Ask me the fat content of semi-skimmed? I've forgotten.

The last time I cried was… playing one of my songs – to myself, alone. There's a couple of slightly personal ones I've written that have made me cry, because they're about marital break-up or when I wasn't seeing my kids very much.

Vinyl, CD or MP3?… tricky question, for each has its place. I have a jukebox which plays old 45s, the car has a CD player which I use a lot, but MP3s are just so convenient.

My most treasured possession is… my new kettle which glows in the dark and has various temperature settings. I got it second-hand on eBay, it's made making tea a very special moment.

The best book I've read is… an impossible question so I'll say Shadow The Sheepdog by Enid Blyton. When I read it aged 10 or 11 it had a very powerful effect on me.

Is the glass half-full or half-empty? …sometimes it can be brimming over and I'll be miserable, and other times nearly empty but I'll feel strangely ecstatic. I'll be honest, a lot of the time my glass is half-empty, but I feed on anxiety to drive me to try and create.

My greatest regret is… I've made too many mistakes to regret any of them. I think I've made a mess of most of my relationships – if I think about it, I haven't got any ex-girlfriends who are still talking to me, maybe one, but I don't particularly want to talk to her. Because I hurt them and I piss them off, probably. I have been accused of being a bit insensitive. Miriam seems to be able to laugh at me… they all laugh at me at first! But y'know, you do learn from your mistakes. To walk round full of regrets is a bit self-destructive, you might as well go, "Well, *that* came out of it."

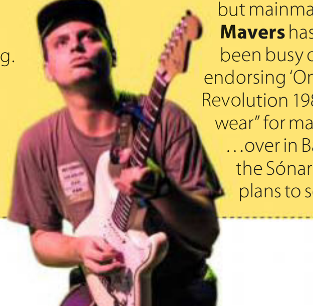
When we die… I don't know but I hope the funeral tea is pleasant, with plenty of vol au vents, which seem to be disappearing as a buffet tea item.

I would like to be remembered… A good dad? Well, he did his best. To be remembered at all would be quite nice, actually.

Graham Fellows tours the UK and releases new album Weird Town in early 2018. See grahamfellowsmusic.com for info

MONDOMOJO

…alt-rock superband **A PERFECT CIRCLE** caught flack last month when they booted 60-plus fans out of a show in Pennsylvania for taking pictures on their phones. But frontman **Maynard James Keenan** stated, "No. Recording. Of. Any. Kind. For. 25. Years." …also in November, **MAC DEMARCO**'s (right) old couch raised more than £3,400 for Rock Camp For Girls Montreal when it was sold on eBay last month. He also signed a pair of his old shoes for the Small Steps Project charity …dunno about that second LP by **THE LA'S** but mainman **Lee Mavers** has at least been busy online endorsing 'One Revolution 1981' "terrace wear" for mature gents …over in Barcelona, the Sónar festival plans to send music by **JEAN MICHEL JARRE**, **Autechre** and others to any inhabited planets orbiting a star in the constellation of Canis Minor, via the Norwegian EISCAT antenna. Fingers crossed for the reply, which could arrive in time for the festival's 50th anniversary in 2044 …also planning ahead is **PHARRELL WILLIAMS**, whose global warming-themed track 100 Years The Song We'll Only Hear If We Care will be released in 2117. Made for Louis XIII cognac, the sole copy's been cut on a clay disc and placed in a safe vulnerable to rising sea levels …and finally, **Kiss**'s **GENE SIMMONS** (left) has been banned for life from appearing on Fox News after he insulted staff and bared his torso…



Alamy (2)

Living life to the freest: Gregory Porter gives the thumbs up.

MINDBLOWERS!

GREGORY PORTER

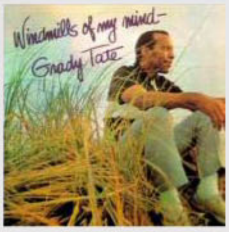
The capped crusader of jazz digs oriental blues, righteous message songs, and a forgotten soundtrack crooner.

ETTA JONES
Always In Our Hearts

1 **ETTA JONES** MR. BOJANGLES

(From Always In Our Hearts, High Note, 2004)

"I first heard this on a jukebox in St Nick's Pub in Harlem some years ago and thought it was amazing. The song is so well-known because of Sammy Davis Jr, but it's really cool to hear a woman do it, with a unique style and delivery. People don't know her. When you say Etta Jones, they say, 'Don't you mean Etta James?' She has a piercing, clear quality like Dinah Washington but her voice was so personal. When you hear her sing, it's almost like you're talking with her on the phone."



2 **GRADY TATE** SACK FULL OF DREAMS

(From Windmills Of My Mind, Skye, 1968)

"Donny Hathaway did it, but Grady Tate did it first. His version is very cool. He was a drummer and a singer. I met him around 2000 – though I never sang with him – he said, 'I've got a song that I think would be really good for you.' It's optimistic and the message is that you can make it and dream of something better. There's a rich, conversational quality to his voice. I love it when somebody surprises you by singing and communicating musically."

FULL STEREO
THE SOUND TRACK ALBUM
IMITATION OF LIFE
DECCA

3 **EARL GRANT** IMITATION OF LIFE

(From Imitation Of Life: The Soundtrack, Decca, 1959)

"This was the theme song to one of my favourite movies, Imitation Of Life. It's about race and class. You have to do a double take when you hear it. You think: is that a Nat 'King' Cole tune I haven't heard before? No, it's Earl Grant. He was a disciple of Nat in terms of his style and sound, that's what initially grabbed me. He had the phrasing of Nat 'King' Cole – and played piano like Nat – but there were certain things that he couldn't do that Nat did, like sliding up to a note gently."

ABBEY IS BLUE
ABBEY LINCOLN

4 **ABBEY LINCOLN** LONG AS YOU'RE LIVING

(From Abbey Is Blue, Riverside, 1959)

"This is a great message song that starts with Abbey singing, 'Forgive me if I seem to preach.' She's talking about not wasting the moments of your life and telling you to always live life to the fullest and the freest. She was connected to the civil rights movement and was trying to give the young African-American population a motivational song and to uplift everyone who had been devastated by racial discrimination. She always wrote from a personal perspective and that influenced me a lot, especially when I wrote [2013 song] When Love Was King. Abbey was influenced by Billie Holiday, but she had her own cool thing going on."

5 **LEON THOMAS** CHINA DOLL

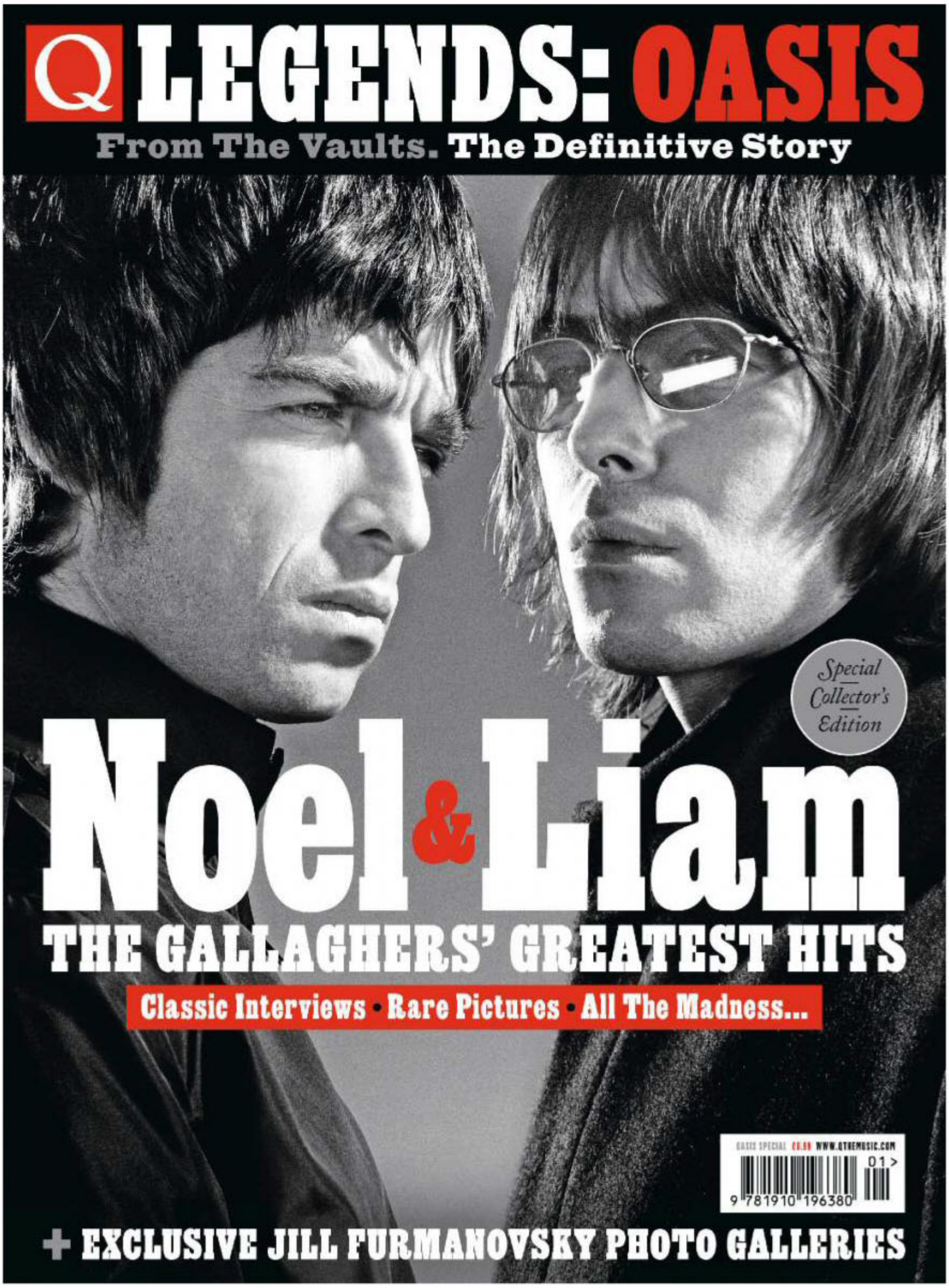
(From Blues And The Soulful Truth, Flying Dutchman, 1973)

"I first heard it when I was in college and was exploring '70s spiritual jazz with a post-civil rights vibe. It's not very PC in terms of the lyrics, to be honest, but the bass line is so funky. It's about an Asian woman that he falls in love with. His mind is blown and he ends up singing that he's 'speaking Chinese.' Stylistically, it's in a place that's in between soul, R&B, and jazz. Leon Thomas really was a totally unique singer. He had a wild jazz yodel and a big, bold barrel of a voice that was very much steeped in the blues. Since I heard it, in the years that followed, I've played with a lot of the musicians that worked with him."

Gregory Porter's *Nat "King" Cole & Me* is out now on Decca

As told to Charles Waring

Where were you while they were getting high?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Fever patch: Kapranos emancipates his daydreaming.

ROCK'N'ROLLCONFIDENTIAL

ALEX KAPRANOS

Franz Ferdinand's gourmet on dancing, renewal and the Lamppost of Destiny.

"Can you wait a minute while I put my phone through the X-ray?" MOJO has caught Franz Ferdinand frontman Alex Kapranos between radio interviews in Paris and Amsterdam, via a taxi to the Eurostar at Gare du Nord station, during a promotional sprint in support of new album, *Always Ascending*.

It's the Glaswegians' first since the departure of founding guitarist Nick McCarthy and the arrival of Julian Corrie (keys, electronics) and Dino Bardot (guitar). The transition has accentuated the dance gene in Franz's pop-smart post-punk-funk, which initially co-spearheaded, alongside The Libertines, the UK response to post-millennial Strokes fever.

They've released four hit LPs since 2004, but the momentum hasn't always been ascendant; in 2010, Kapranos considered splitting the band. But the Franz continental express continues, quite literally as Kapranos turfs a businessman out of his reserved Eurostar seat to keep talking.

It's been five years since your previous album.

We toured for a long time, and we recorded the FFS [Franz Ferdinand + Sparks] album in 2015, and toured FFS into 2016. Then Nick left – which we knew before the FFS tour started – and Bob [Hardy, bass], Paul [Thompson, drums] and I started discussing what the new identity of the band could be. It's great to allow that freedom of thought, to not necessarily be chasing a definite destination. I work hard, but I do enjoy intense periods of laziness. I blame the Reformation for our terrible sense of guilt! Emancipate your daydreaming, I say! Then we met Julian, recorded the album through 2017, and then met Dino.

After 15 years, what motivates Franz Ferdinand to keep going?

If you're fortunate enough to discover what your thing is, you do it for the rest of your life. Since I started writing songs at 14, I knew everything else would be secondary. There are other things I enjoy, but they're not the primary purpose. One thing I found inspiring about Ron and Russ [Mael of Sparks] was seeing two quite elderly guys with more energy and motivation than some people I knew when I was 17. After Nick left, Bob and Paul were as completely engaged and excited as they've ever been, as I was.

That's where the title *Always Ascending* comes in?

Yes, it's a statement of intent. We didn't write it that way but when we were choosing the album title, it summed up our mentality. After a decade of the band, we had a choice, to continue living in that decade and repeat ourselves, or to leave it behind. Nick leaving was a great gift, actually, and combined with FFS, where our roles were jumbled up – I was co-writing with Ron Mael! – it meant things had to change. I think of *Always Ascending* as our second first album.

There was a time when you wanted Franz Ferdinand to end.

Funny, until you mentioned that, I'd totally forgotten about it, and I'd rather leave it that way. It's like an old relationship: it's over, I'm no longer in that place. It went wrong but it wasn't

CASSIUS
I<3
U SO

ICE COLD WITH ALEX

Kapranos's sonic kicks.

1 **U.S. Girls** *Mad As Hell* (4AD SINGLE, 2017)

2 **Anderson Paak** *Come Down* (STEEL WOOL SINGLE, 2016)

3 **Cassius** *I <3 U So* (ED BANGER SINGLE, 2011)

4 **Hamish Imlach** *Cod Liver Oil And Orange Juice* (FROM *HAMISH IMLACH*, XTRA, 1966)

5 **Bunny Brown** *Fat Boy* (SONG BIRD SINGLE, 1972)

Thomas Baltes/Eyevine, Alamy

that bad. Typical bloody blokes, we hadn't verbalised what was bothering us, and once we did, we realised how trivial it all was.

***Always Ascending* could be your most dance-driven album yet.**

We wanted to make dance music right at the start, and I'd say the ingredients are the same, just mixed differently. On the first album, I was playing guitar to emulate an arpeggiator or sequencer, and maybe we've taken that to a further extreme on this record. Bands usually bolt themselves to a sequencer arrangement, but we've done the opposite. We play everything as if it's been programmed. It's dance music played by humans.

2016's stand-alone single Demagogue was the first 'new Franz' recording, inspired by Trump.

We recorded it and released it within three days, because the song was only pertinent to that moment. His popularity was becoming increasingly apparent, but no one was singing about one of the biggest things in our lives at that point. It influenced the writing of this album, but also, on a more general level. You either ignore something, or say, Fuck this, I will do this instead, and ascend to something better, to celebrate what's around you. It's a way to show defiance.

Talking of defiance, you support Scottish independence. Will Brexit will accelerate it?

I really don't know. In an ideal world, I'd be living in an independent Scotland but as part of the EU. All the journalists I've spoken to in Europe all want to ask about Brexit. It's like you have this old, racist uncle, and everyone wants to know why you're spending time with him, and you're trying to explain that your views aren't the same. I'm now anxious about what's developing in Germany. But we're in an age when making predictions is extremely dangerous, so you won't get any from me.

Tell us something you've never told an interviewer before.

I crashed my Lada when I was 17. It was originally my grandad's, a ridiculous car, really, the pinnacle of Soviet engineering, as drawn by a five-year-old! But I loved it. I was with my friend Andrew, who was eating a Walnut Whip, and he'd bitten the walnut off, as you do, and I was trying to get the rest to stick on his nose, by slamming the brakes and speeding up, and I lost control and totalled a lamppost. No injuries, though. The metaphor being, the Walnut Whip is the kernel of creativity, and you can never force it to be something that it wasn't meant to be, because you end up colliding with the lamppost of destiny.

Martin Aston

Always Ascending is released on February 9 on Domino.

LAST NIGHT A RECORD CHANGED MY LIFE

MIKE MILLS

R.E.M.'s bassist salutes The Limeliters' 1961 album *Tonight: In Person.*

"I was probably 11, digging though my parents' record collection. *Tonight: In Person* was a record that a lot of fairly cool parents would have had at that time: they also had *Whipped Cream And Other Delights* by Herb Alpert & The Tijuana Brass and Tom Lehrer. The sleeve image was simply The Limeliters around the microphone singing and playing, and it looked like so much fun to me.

When I played it, something about it just captured my imagination and I probably needle-dropped it a few times in a row every night that I listened to it. They were all extremely accomplished musicians, American, but they kind of took you around the world with this record: there were songs from everywhere, Molly Malone from Ireland, The Monks Of St Bernard, sung in French, and Rumania, Rumania, which they do sing in Romanian. Lou Gottlieb [bass] had a PhD in musicology, so he was a deep diver in this music. The singer, Glenn Yarbrough, was an Irish tenor, so he had this beautiful high voice and the other two were a good bit deeper, so there were these incredible harmonies when they sang together, and I think that's what really grabbed my attention.

On the radio, I was listening to the British invasion, Motown, a lot of bubblegum. This record provided a window into another world. It was intimate; because it was a live record, there was interaction with the audience. They played in nightclubs like the hungry i in San Francisco, and you can imagine them on-stage playing to people drinking and smoking. They were a fairly risqué band, with lots of allusions to adult behaviour, sex and drinking, and I enjoyed the funny parts, even ones I didn't really understand. It sounded like a party, and it made performing sound interesting. They kind of started it for me.

I hadn't listened in some time until about two years ago. With a musician's ear, it actually sounded better, but the comedic aspect was not quite as exciting. It's still lingering around though, and I find myself singing those songs all the time. I don't doubt that some of those harmonies influenced what I've sung in R.E.M. It was such a discovery, it opened my eyes to things I didn't know existed. It's the sort of thing you never forget."

The 25th Anniversary Edition of R.E.M.'s Automatic For The People is out now on UMC.

Things go better with folk: (bottom) an album owned by the cooler type of parent; (below) Mills hums Rumania, Rumania.

"THEY WERE A FAIRLY RISQUÉ BAND."

LSP-2272
LIVING STEREO
TONIGHT: IN PERSON
The Limeliters
RECORDED HERE AND NOW
RCA VICTOR

DEVO
SATISFACTION (I Can't Get Me No)
SLOPPY (I Saw My Baby Getting)

MOJO EYEWITNESS

DEVO REINVENT THE STONES' SATISFACTION

In '77, the Akron new wave weirdoids took Mick'n'Keiths' classic of R&B exasperation, remade it as thrilling deviant minimalism and created one of rock's best cover versions. The road went via disgusted Christianity, Bowie and Eno and, in '78, help from Neil Young – but how did it all fit together?

> "OUR SATISFACTION WAS CONSIDERED A PARODY."
> **MARK MOTHERSBAUGH**

DEVO
PRODUCED BY BRIAN ENO
WBS 8675
(WAA8152)S
2:38
ABKCO Music Inc. BMI
From the Warner Bros. Album BSK-3239 Q: ARE WE NOT MEN? A: WE ARE DEVO!
(I CAN'T GET NO) SATISFACTION
(Mick Jagger/Keith Richard)

PART 1 "IT'S DIRTY"

Devo vox/keys/guitar Mark Mothersbaugh recalls speeding, stripping and getting Jagger's permission.

DECCA
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(I Can't Get No) SATISFACTION
THE ROLLING STONES

"I bought (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction in elementary school and it was the most amazing thing I'd ever heard. Somebody from my mom's church came over while I was sitting on the floor playing the song on my little 45 player. This woman says to my mom, 'Mary, why are you letting that boy listen to that song? It's dirty.' I went, Wow! I took it to the basement, and listened to it a million times. I kept trying to figure out what was dirty. It made it interesting that the woman from church was upset by it.

In Devo's early days (they formed in 1973), we were thinking about how to relate what we were doing to what was going on in pop music. People listened to us play back then and they just thought it sounded crazy. One day we were rehearsing in this freezing cold car wash and Bob Casale made up this little guitar riff. Alan put a beat on it, and I started singing the lyrics to Satisfaction over it. Once we added Satisfaction to our repertoire, it allowed people to get a handle on us. We'd be playing the song, and it would take them into the second verse before they realised, 'I know these lyrics'.

I think those are some of the most amazing lyrics ever written in rock'n'roll, dealing with conspicuous consumption and the stupidity of capitalism and sexual frustration all in one song. It encapsulated what was going on with kids, much more than any hippy songs, as far as I was concerned.

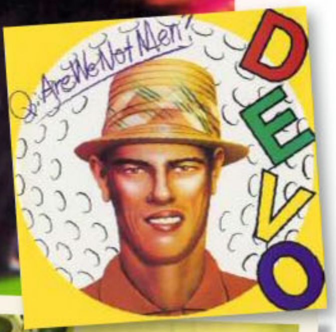
Comparatively speaking, [our first version of Satisfaction] plodded along. The versions we were doing of our songs in the early days were very slow, more like Captain Beefheart material. Then we started paying attention to the punk scene. We're looking at bands like the Ramones and Sex Pistols, we're like, Wait a minute, that's the energy that feels right for us. We started speeding our stuff up.

In 1977 we went to Germany [to record first album *Q: Are We Not Men? A: We Are Devo!*] with David Bowie and Brian Eno. Our goal was to make our record as faithful as we could to what we were doing live. But when we weren't in the studio, Eno would go in on his own. Brian and David added on extra harmony vocals and put in new synth parts. We took all the stuff out that they did. We were trying to protect what we thought we were. Brian probably doesn't even care any more, but it'd be interesting to give him the unmixed album back, and say, What was it you guys were trying to do?

Back in the 1970s, you had to get permission to do parodies and our Satisfaction was considered a parody. We had a major problem with [re-recorded 1979 single] Secret Agent Man, because when Johnny Rivers heard it, he goes, 'They can't use those words out of my song.' Our manager went to a publishing branch in Japan, and before they were alerted not to give us permission to do a parody, they granted us rights. Somebody in Japan probably got fired because of it. It was the same with Satisfaction. We had to get the Stones' permission.

Our manager set us up with a meeting with Mick Jagger [in a New York conference room in 1978]. When I was a kid, Mick was like a god-status entity. I couldn't imagine him eating food or having to pee or something. He and Keith Richards had made the best song ever in the history of humans. So we're in a room with him, sitting there in our janitor outfits, and he looks like he just stepped out of the Altamont movie or something, in low-cut bellbottoms. We play our version of Satisfaction and he starts dancing around the room. You're like, This is as good as it gets on this planet.

[After the meeting], Gerry and Mick and I all went down to street level. We said goodbye, and he said goodbye, and then he just took off down the street."


Q: Are We Not Men?
DEVO

All mod nylons: (clockwise from main) Devo (from left) Alan Myers, Bob and Mark Mothersbaugh, Gerald and Bob Casale; the Stones' inspiring single; Devo's debut album; with mascot Booji Boy; live at Max's Kansas City, NYC, 1977; fan Mick Jagger; Gerry with fan David Bowie at Max's; the single; Mark post-gig; the 45's picture cover.

TURN OVER! DEVO'S GERALD CASALE ON MAKING VIDEOS FOR LASER DISC AND BIG, BIG TROUBLE.

Getty Images (5), Rex

Jocko homo sapient: (main above) Gerald Casale (left) and Bob Mothersbaugh on-stage in special protective garb; (inset) playing Saturday Night Live; (below) scenes from the Satisfaction video.

PART 2 "EXTRA-INTERESTING"

DEVO REINVENT SATISFACTION

Devo bassist/voice Gerald Casale recalls adroit moves on rock TV, and undermining the machine.

"The album came out at the end of August 1978. Satisfaction was being played in England [the song reached Number 41 in April 1978], but we weren't really getting any traction on the radio here. But we lucked out that October, because our manager Elliot Roberts also managed Neil Young. [Saturday Night Live creator/producer] Lorne Michaels wanted Neil so bad that Elliot promised him he'd get him Neil if he would let Devo play.

We actually played SNL the week after The Rolling Stones. We had wanted to be on the show earlier, but Lorne Michaels did put his foot down to Elliot. That had nothing to do with why we played Satisfaction on the show, but it made it extra-interesting.

Saturday Night Live was taken very seriously back then. It was the only game in town. Everybody who was 18-29 years old, they were watching Saturday Night Live. The response was instant. Overnight we went from being this little club band to having to re-book the tour to larger venues.

Warner had given us a $5,000 promotion budget for the first album. They wanted to make cardboard cutouts or something. We said, Let's use the money to make videos instead. We were trying to think of graphic examples of being denied satisfaction, like where desire causes pain. I had read something about a kid getting electrocuted when he stuck his spoon in the toaster. But we made it a fork instead because it was funnier.

We thought we were going to make, believe it or not, laser discs that would be a collection of film shorts. We believed all this stuff we were reading in Popular Mechanics. We thought laser discs were going to revolutionise everything, and we would be right there, the only people doing it. The laser disc thing never happened. But then [on August 1, 1981] MTV came along.

They only started in three cities before they franchised it. I think it was New York and Chicago and somewhere down south. They started playing all of our videos. We had five or six videos by that point and they started showing them all because they didn't have much in the way of programming. Nobody was making videos yet. Then came Video Killed The Radio Star by The Buggles and that's when they went national.

Once they went national, Devo was in big trouble. They weren't big censors before. But then suddenly they were being attacked by religious groups and standards people. The president of MTV, Bob Pittman, was a son of a Baptist preacher and they became more conservative. It wasn't like Devo was showing scantily clad women; they just smelled that our message wasn't the corporate message and that there was something subversive there.

[Satisfaction] was so whacked out that it was an example of what [Devo philosophy] de-evolution meant musically. We had taken a massive worldwide hit that everybody knew and showed them, graphically, what you can do if you rethink it. It was a way into Devo for a lot of people. It made the Devo manifesto more understandable."

> "MTV SMELLED THAT OUR MESSAGE WASN'T THE CORPORATE MESSAGE." GERALD CASALE

Adapted from Ray Padgett's Cover Me: The Stories Behind The Greatest Cover Songs Of All Time (Sterling Publishing) – out now.

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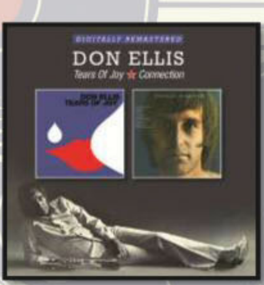
And the Beat Goes On...


DIGITALLY REMASTERED
DON ELLIS
Tears Of Joy ★ Connection

DON ELLIS
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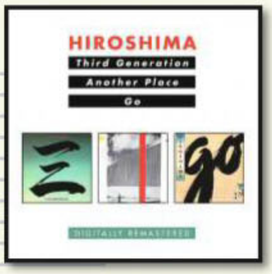
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Another Place
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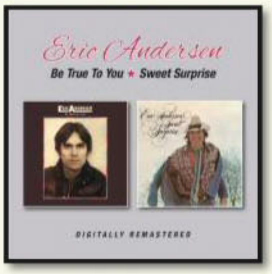
Eric Andersen
Be True To You ★ Sweet Surprise
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ERIC ANDERSEN
Be True To You/Sweet Surprise
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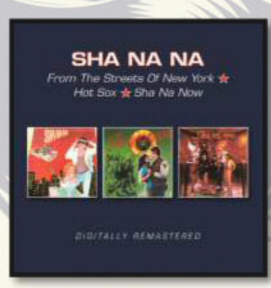
SHA NA NA
From The Streets Of New York ★
Hot Sox ★ Sha Na Now
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SHA NA NA
From The Streets Of New York/
Hot Sox/Sha Na Now
BGOCD1306

Nicolette Larson

NICOLETTE LARSON
All Dressed Up
& No Place To Go
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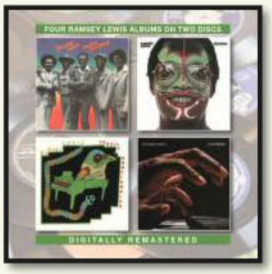
Caught In The Act
Styx
Live

STYX
Caught In The Act Live
BGOCD1200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SARAH McQUAID

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I'M IN LOVE WITH MARGARET THATCHER

TIMEMACHINE

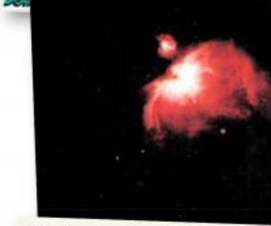
JANUARY 1980 ...THE INDIE CHART IS BORN

JANUARY 19 Iain McNay, who with Richard Jones co-founded the indie label Cherry Red in 1978, was in visionary mood. "Punk changed everything," he recalled, contending that, prior to the punk breakthrough in 1976, the music business had become stagnant. "The major companies controlled everything," he declared. "Anything they didn't like and couldn't control didn't get released."

Wanting to seize the initiative, McNay was the first to moot the idea of a chart devoted to records released on labels independent of the big operators.

An indie chart seemed a desirable answer to all ills. Cherry Red, along with fellow autonomous renegades like Rough Trade and Mute, were shifting quantities of records to which the majors wouldn't give warehouse-room. And while some indie releases *were* selling enough to register in the higher echelons of the national charts, others were never going to figure in those mainstream listings. McNay duly got together with John Hayward, a journalist who worked for Record Business magazine and with considerable input from researcher Barry Lazell (and later, Alan Jones), the first indie charts appeared in the aforesaid magazine on January 19, 1980.

Dingle's RECORDS
SID 211 – A
DAYTRIP TO BANGOR
(Didn't We Have a Lovely Time)
FIDDLER'S DRAM



DEAD KENNEDYS
california über alles

Top of the singles heap was Spizzenergi's Where's Captain Kirk? A speedy piece of post-punk rock'n'roll, it found mainman Spizz, a refugee from art school, assuming the form of Star Trek's commander of the Starship Enterprise. "By becoming him," he claimed, "I thought I could go kicking sand around in people's faces."

A Rough Trade release, the single stayed on the charts for 50 weeks, though a proposed photoshoot in the company of William Shatner was nixed by CBS who had the rights to the Star Trek soundtrack album. "They didn't want some punks getting mileage out of their product," it was reported.

DIRK WEARS WHITE SOX
ADAM AND THE ANTS

Second was an unlikely inclusion in the otherwise Rough Trade-dominated rock chart: released on Middlesex's Dingle's Records, Daytrip To Bangor (Didn't We Have A Lovely Time) was a jolly, kiss-me-quick item by Fiddler's Dram, a folk group headed by bodhran-bashing Cathy Lesurf. Unlike Where's Captain Kirk?, it made it onto Top Of The Pops and reached Number 3 on the national listings. In truth, the song was inspired by a day out in Rhyl. Renamed because the name Bangor scanned better, it caused a furore among Rhyl councillors who proclaimed that the use of their town's name would have done wonders for the local tourist trade.

And so the list went on: in third place was Delta 5's punk-funker Mind Your Own Business (Rough Trade), which asked "Do you want a taste of my ice cream?" and would eventually sell in excess of 15,000 copies. Alongside still-known quantities including Joy Division's Transmission, Cabaret Voltaire's Silent Command and Dead Kennedys' California Über Alles, there were other lesser-sung chart entries that nonetheless showed

Enterprise allowance scheme: Spizzenergi, possibly already renamed Athletico Spizz 80, (from left) Mark Cornfield, Dave Scott, Spizz, Clive Parker, Jim Solar; (bottom) Iain McNay and (right) Richard Jones; (right and below left) hits on the inaugural indie charts.

> **"I THOUGHT I COULD GO KICKING SAND AROUND IN PEOPLE'S FACES."**
> **Spizz**

how lively the independent scene was. In at Number 19, Nazis Against Fascism's pogo-dancing Sid Did It (Stage 1) was co-written by poet Heathcote Williams and sung by Ben Brierley of The Vibrators; meanwhile, Burnley jokers Notsensibles' Number 16 seller I'm In Love With Margaret Thatcher (Redball) – featuring a B-side titled Gary Bushell's Band Of The Week – was exhumed for the Meryl Streep-starring 2011 movie The Iron Lady.

In addition to the singles listing, Record Business also published the first indie album chart, one headed by *Dirk Wears White Sox*, the debut album by Adam And The Ants. Adam was perhaps best known at the time for an appearance in Derek Jarman's movie Jubilee. Informed by one-time manager Malcolm McLaren that *Dirk* was too esoteric and that he was going "the wrong way about things", Adam was duly satisfied when his Do It label release lauded it over Joy Division's *Unknown Pleasures* and Stiff Little Fingers' *Inflammable Material* on that initial 1980 tally.

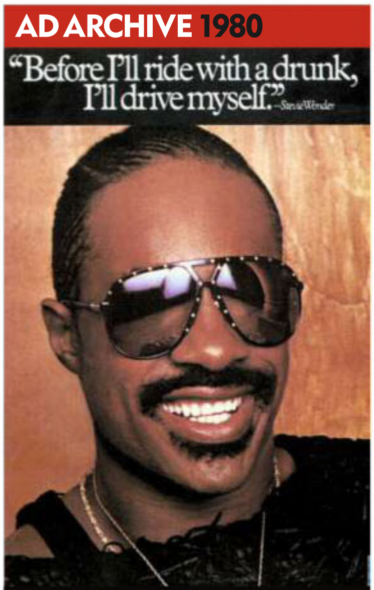
The Record Business indie chart eventually became the property of MIRB, suppliers of the "official" chart to the BBC. In 1997, Barry Lazell compiled Indie Hits 1980-1989, a complete rundown on what is now perceived as the indie chart's golden era, before the majors caught on to the ploy of promoting certain new acts by means of independent distribution.

"By 1993 the indie chart had become a farce," recalled Iain McNay, "Many of the records in it had nothing to do with independent companies and had become meaningless."

It was so long to Crass, Small Wonder, Dining Out, Truth, Fast and many other bijou but fascinating labels on that first listing. But for a while, all things had seemed possible.

Fred Dellar

AD ARCHIVE 1980


"Before I'll ride with a drunk, I'll drive myself." —Stevie Wonder

Stevie Wonder campaigns against drink-driving. See also 1984's 45 Don't Drive Drunk from The Woman In Red OST.

Paul Slattery, Getty Images, Rex (2), Advertising Archives

ALSO THIS MONTH

CLIFF HONOURED

1 **Cliff Richard** (above) is awarded an MBE for his services to music.

BONY BREAKS

2 **Larry Williams**, who had rockin' hits with Dizzy Miss Lizzy, Short Fat Fanny and Bony Moronie, is found dead from gunshot wounds in his Los Angeles home. He appeared to have committed suicide, but some suspect foul play.

CLASH START

5 **The Clash** begin a UK tour at Friars in Aylesbury. **Ian Dury And The Blockheads** open, replacing original support act **Toots And The Maytals**.

HEY HUGH

7 **The Stranglers' Hugh Cornwell** is sentenced to two months in jail for possession of drugs.His first offence, he is freed on bail pending appeal.

FACTORY FRESH

8 **Joy Division** cut two songs, These Days and Love Will Tear Us Apart, at Pennine Sound Studios, Oldham.

BIG FUNDS

13 At California's Oakland Alameda Coliseum, **Jefferson Starship, Grateful Dead** and **The Beach Boys** perform a benefit concert for the people of Kampuchea.

GONE SOUTH

18 Capricorn Records, the Macon, GA label famed for its Southern rock releases, files for bankruptcy.

RUDE START

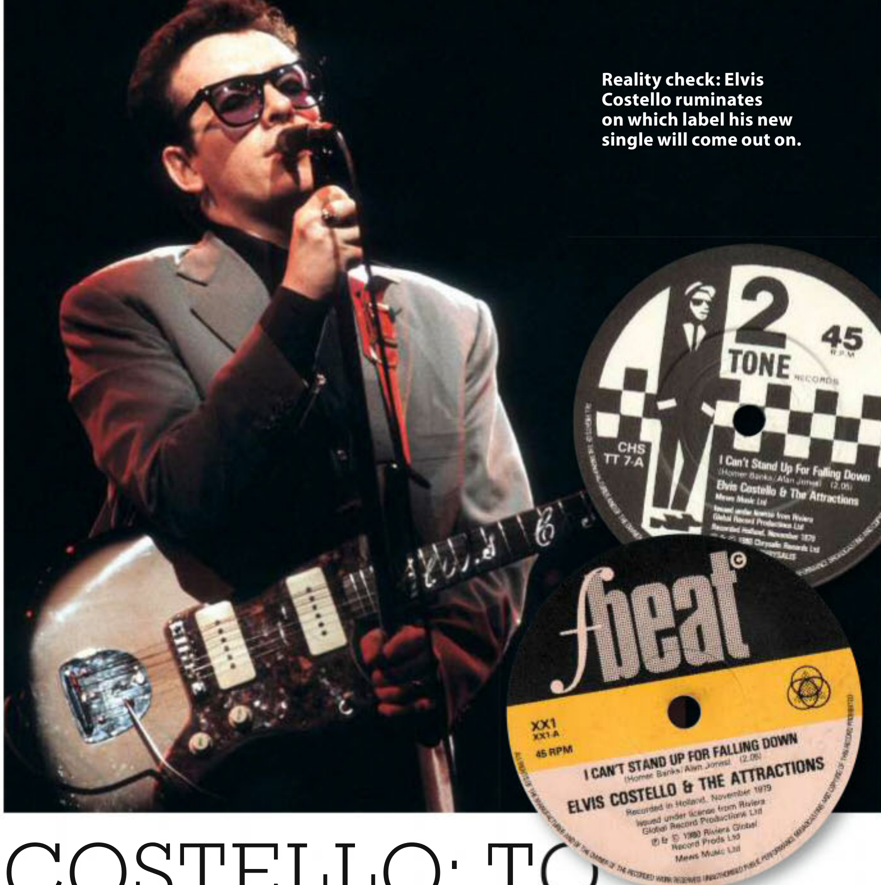
25 **The Specials** play the opening date of their first American tour at New York club Hurrah.

FULL NELSON

26 **Prince**'s US TV debut comes on American Bandstand when he performs I Wanna Be Your Lover.

A TRUE PRO

30 **Professor Longhair** (born Roy Byrd), one of New Orleans' greatest pianists and an influence on **Fats Domino** and others, dies aged 62.


2 TONE RECORDS
45 R.P.M.
CHS TT 7-A
I Can't Stand Up For Falling Down
(Homer Banks/Alan Jones) (2.05)
Elvis Costello & The Attractions
f beat
XX1
XX1-A
45 RPM
I CAN'T STAND UP FOR FALLING DOWN
(Homer Banks/Alan Jones) (2.05)
ELVIS COSTELLO & THE ATTRACTIONS
Recorded in Holland, November 1979
Issued under license from Riviera Global Record Productions Ltd
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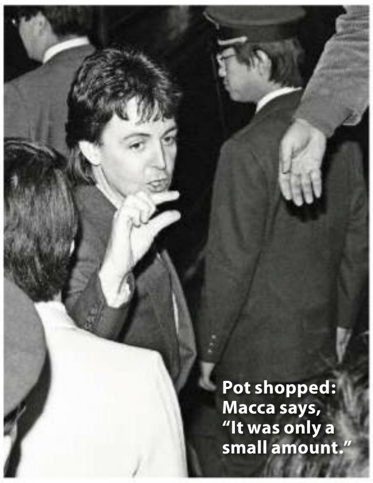
Reality check: Elvis Costello ruminates on which label his new single will come out on.

COSTELLO: TO 2-TONE OR F-BEAT?

JANUARY 26 It's announced that an injunction has been granted to WEA Records preventing Elvis Costello from releasing his single, I Can't Stand Up For Falling Down, on The Specials' 2 Tone label. The ban will stay until preliminary legal hearings next month, but Costello says that if he loses this fight then he may well pack up the rock business altogether. The single will be released on F-Beat Records in March, with stocks of the 2 Tone-pressed 45 being given away at gigs.



Pot shopped: Macca says, "It was only a small amount."

MACCA GETS BUSTED

JANUARY 16 Paul McCartney is arrested in Tokyo for possession of marijuana after customs officials search him at Narita International Airport and find 219 grams of the plant hidden amid his baggage. In her hotel room Linda declares: "Paul is now in some kind of detention centre and I have not been allowed to see him. I'll never come back to Japan. It's my first trip and my last." Macca is looking at a possible seven years' hard labour, but after nine days, he is deported back home.

TOP TEN

US JAZZ ALBUMS JANUARY 19

1 **ONE ON ONE** BOB JAMES & EARL KLUGH COLUMBIA

2 **AMERICAN GARAGE** PAT METHENY GROUP ECM

3 **ANGEL OF THE NIGHT** ANGELA BOFILL ARISTA/GRP

4 **PIZZAZZ** PATRICE RUSHEN ELEKTRA

5 **RISE** HERB ALPERT A&M

6 **A TASTE FOR PASSION** JEAN LUC PONTY ATLANTIC

7 **STREET BEAT** TOM SCOTT COLUMBIA

8 **DON'T ASK** SONNY ROLLINS MILESTONE

9 **BEST OF FRIENDS** TWENNYNINE FT. LENNY WHITE ELEKTRA

10 **MORNING DANCE** SPYRO GYRA MCA

Patrice Rushen: Pizzazz pianist.

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THE SONIC REDUCER

1953-2017

Far more than just a rhythm guitarist, AC/DC's Malcolm Young left us on November 18.

In an industry often fuelled by artifice and based on self-aggrandisement, AC/DC's rhythm guitarist Malcolm Young was a breed apart. He avoided the spotlight, eschewing the trappings of success and suffering fools lightly. In concert he was equally happy to hang back, standing stage right and playing off the drums and bass as he and his younger brother, Angus, delivered a wall of sound built on their interlocking riffs.

While Angus – armed with school uniform and extrovert on-stage antics – helped define the band's image, Malcolm ensured their musical consistency. Above all he understood that pure, primal rhythm could move the most stubborn of audiences. If early-day critics lambasted the band for the perceived simplicity of their music, Malcolm's approach was one which musicians not only admired, but aspired to. "I was trying to play like Malcolm Young… to play that riff like a robot," said Josh Homme, speaking to MOJO last month regarding the first Queens Of The Stone Age LP.

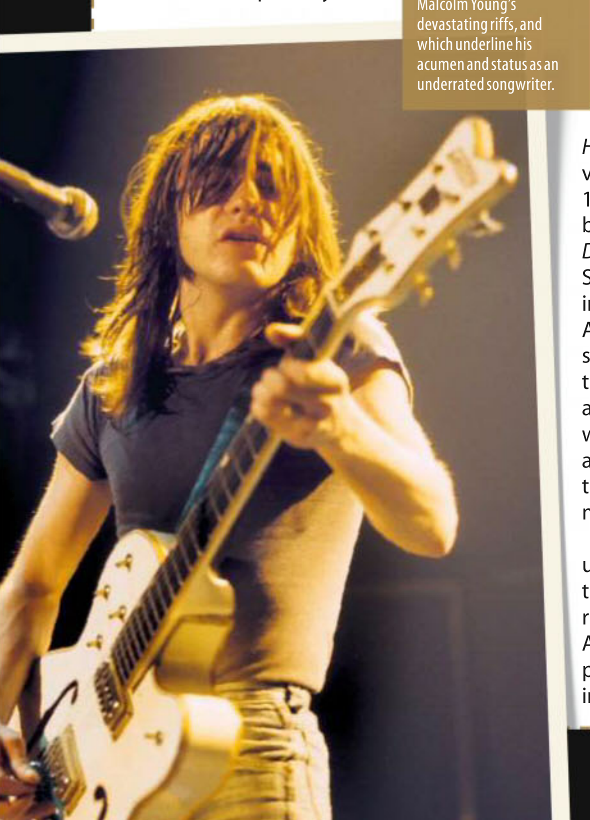
Malcolm himself, of course, worshipped the infectious, electrifying rhythmic joy that animated '50s rock'n'roll records. When this correspondent handed him a Chess Records collection compiled by MOJO back in 2005, Malcolm assessed the tracklisting closely, expressing his love for the likes of Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley and Muddy Waters, but also remarking on the vocal power of Etta James. In truth, his influences were broader than he often cared to admit, and ran to The Who and The Beatles, as well as the Stones whose Chicago-influenced electric blues template he built upon. Equally, he had no truck with what he termed "fancy music" – Atlantic Records labelmates Led Zeppelin included.

LET THERE BE ROCK
AC/DC

THE LEGACY

The Album: *Let There Be Rock* (Atlantic, 1977)

The Sound: Harry Vanda and George Young's dry-as-a-bone production enhances the sheer power of classics that include Overdose, Hell Ain't A Bad Place To Be, Whole Lotta Rosie and the title track – tunes powered by Malcolm Young's devastating riffs, and which underline his acumen and status as an underrated songwriter.



Job well done: Malcolm Young, a pillar of AC/DC; (below) the band's leader, catalyst and riffmeister on stage.

Martyn Goddard/Alamy, Getty Images

Such external influences aside, Malcolm was encouraged to pick up an instrument from an early age. When the Young family emigrated from Glasgow to Australia in 1963, he found himself bullied due to both his diminutive stature and his accent. The experienced toughened him further, contributing to AC/DC's own streetwise attitude a decade later.

Equally significant in Malcolm's life was the influence of elder brother George Young. As the principal songwriter in The Easybeats, Australia's biggest beat group, George had tasted the spoils of pop stardom but ultimately failed to enjoy sustained global success. When The Easybeats split in '69, George moved into production with his bandmate Harry Vanda, and soon began nurturing the talents of his younger siblings, instilling a sense of discipline and a competitive edge.

As the band began to develop a reputation on Australia's roughneck bar and club scene, George and Vanda also helped them shape their sound on early albums that included *High Voltage* (the Australian version, released in February 1975), *T.N.T.* (released December 1975) and *Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap* (released in September 1976, though initially deemed too raw for the American market). From the start, however, Malcolm was the band's undisputed leader and catalyst, writing riffs whose increasing economy allowed for greater impact, all the while ensuring that the melodies remained accessible.

The band's ambitions were underlined when they moved to London in 1976. In 1977 they released *Let There Be Rock*, AC/DC's first truly classic LP and proof that Malcolm had come into his own as a songwriter.

> "HE HAD NO TRUCK WITH WHAT HE TERMED 'FANCY MUSIC' – LABEL MATES LED ZEPPELIN INCLUDED."

There followed a frenetic period that spawned three further epochal albums: *Powerage* (released May 1978), *If You Want Blood, You've Got It* (the devastating live set from late '78) and *Highway To Hell* (July 1979).

The latter proved to be a watershed release, marking the departure of Vanda and Young as producers and the arrival of Mutt Lange who, by polishing AC/DC's sound and emphasising their backing vocals, helped break the band Stateside. Most significant of all, however, *Highway To Hell* was also the last LP to feature singer Bon Scott, whose death on February 19, 1980 from acute alcohol poisoning shook the band to its core. Typically, Malcolm, then aged 27, was instrumental in ensuring that AC/DC would continue, throwing himself into completing *Back In Black* – the band's most commercially successful album – with new frontman Brian Johnson.

If that crucial three-year period transformed AC/DC into one of the biggest grossing bands on the planet, the Young brothers remained visibly unchanged. As the '80s progressed, the band embraced the MTV era, but refused to alter their approach. "We had to [do videos] but it's not the sort of thing we enjoy," remarked Malcolm years later, aware of the commercial needs placed upon the band. "Sometimes we'll do well, sometimes not so well, but the music of AC/DC will always be the same," he added.

Away from the music, Malcolm displayed shrewd business sense. He was protective, private and, at times, ruthless, firing band members with a distinct lack of sentimentality. He also played a huge role in safeguarding the band's catalogue, meaning that there were no deluxe editions or even an official 'best of'. Calls for an AC/DC musical also fell on deaf ears. Intent on ensuring that AC/DC were in control of their own destiny, Malcolm ran the band in that manner until 2014 when, having already battled cancer, he began suffering memory loss and was diagnosed with dementia, and could run it no more.

On November 28, 10 days after his passing, his funeral service was held at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney. During the service, Malcolm's 1963 Gretsch Jet Firebird was seen resting upon his coffin. A pipe band played a medley of songs as the funeral procession left the church, AC/DC's It's A Long Way To The Top (If You Wanna Rock'n'Roll) and Waltzing Matilda among them. Angus did not speak at his brother's funeral. He had said everything several days earlier, commenting on the remarkable bond the pair enjoyed. "He leaves behind an enormous legacy that will live on forever," he added. "Malcolm, job well done."

Phil Alexander

David Cassidy: hitmaking heartthrob of The Partridge Family.

DAVID CASSIDY

'70s TEEN IDOL

BORN 1950

Born to show business parents in New York City, in 1970 aspirant musician and actor David Cassidy was cast in US pop sitcom The Partridge Family as dreamboat eldest son Keith. Global fame would be his after he sang the Family's debut single I Think I Love You. Particularly successful in Britain, he would record solo from 1972 and soon eclipsed his fictional TV brood. The hyper-ventilating 'Cassidymania' that followed was short but intense, its end hastened by the tragic death of a 14-year-old fan after a crush at a show at London's White City Stadium in May 1974. Cassidy ceased touring thereafter for almost a decade, but continued to record and act on stage and TV. In later years he suffered from alcohol-related and financial problems, and in February announced he was suffering from dementia. He died while awaiting a liver transplant: according to his daughter Katie, his final words were, "so much wasted time".

Clive Prior

PAUL BUCKMASTER

MASTER ARRANGER

BORN 1946

British-Italian arranger Paul Buckmaster's talent flowered at the point when rock and pop were maturing and in need of a broader palette of colours. A classically-trained cellist enthused by J.S. Bach as well as jazz, he had already backed acts including the Bee Gees, The Hollies and Paul Jones when, in 1969, he added strings to David Bowie's Space Oddity and its B-side Wild Eyed Boy From Freecloud. Having rehabilitated orchestration from its Mantovani-esque associations of MOR, the following decade saw him work on tracks like Carly Simon's You're So Vain and Harry Nilsson's Without You, LPs such as The Rolling Stones' *Sticky Fingers*, Leonard Cohen's *Songs Of Love And Hate*, Miles Davis's *On The Corner* and *Big Fun*, Grateful Dead's *Terrapin Station* and six Elton John LPs. The last-named albums featured the classics Your Song and Tiny Dancer, and he continued to work with the singer until 2001's *Songs From The West Coast*. Buckmaster also played on Bowie's unused soundtrack for the 1976 movie The Man Who Fell To Earth, and composed for films including Terry Gilliam's 12 Monkeys in 1995. In the last decade, his arrangements appeared on albums by Guns N'Roses, Taylor Swift and Ben Folds Five.

Ian Harrison

THEY ALSO SERVED

HAWKWIND audio-generator and oscillator operator **DIKMIK** (above, AKA **Michael Davies** b.1943) was a face on the Twickenham blues scene before roadieing for **Dave Brock**'s freak band supreme. Playing echoing swathes of cosmic noise from a green baize card table, he joined the group for their self-titled debut in 1970 and was responsible for his "speed buddy" bassist **Lemmy**'s additon to the ranks in 1971. DikMik left after 1973's mighty live album *Space Ritual*. He rejoined his old bandmates for the 'Hawkestra' reunion in Brixton in 2000.

FAITH NO MORE vocalist **CHUCK MOSLEY** (b.1959) involved in the San Francisco punk scene before joining the California alt-metallers in 1984. He made two albums with the band, *We Care A Lot* and *Introduce Yourself*, before being replaced by **Mike Patton** in 1988. He later played with **Bad Brains**, **Cement** and **Primitive Race**, released the 2009 LP *Will Rap Over Hard Rock For Food* and later re-joined his old bandmates for several high-profile reunion shows.

MIRACLES singer **WARREN 'PETE' MOORE** (b.1938) sang bass alongside his childhood friend **Smokey Robinson** from their 1955 formation in Detroit until their split in 1978. With Robinson, he co-wrote hit songs for the group including The Tracks Of My Tears, Going To A Go-Go and Love Machine; the duo also wrote for **Marvin Gaye** and **The Temptations**. Moore also produced records for Gaye and **The Supremes**, and was inducted into the Vocal Group Hall Of Fame in 2012.

SOUL VOICE **ROBERT KNIGHT** (b.1945) was a member of Tennessee vocal group **The Paramounts** when he sang on 1961 US R&B hit Free Me. After a stint studying chemistry, in 1967 he reached US pop Number 13 with his version of Everlasting Love. He also hit the Top 100 on two more occasions, and reached Number 10 in the UK in 1973 with his 1968 cut Love On A Mountain Top, thanks to its popularity among Northern soul fans. His Everlasting Love reached the UK Top 20 the following year.

AUSTRALIAN composer **DUDLEY SIMPSON** (b.1922) conducted orchestras at the Royal Opera House before working in television. He composed incidental music for more than 300 episodes of Doctor Who from 1964 to 1980, wrote the theme tunes to BBC sci-fi drama Blake's Seven and ITV's The Tomorrow People, as well as scoring numerous TV adaptions of literary works. In 1987 he retired and returned to Australia.

AUDIO ENGINEER **HEDLEY JONES** (b.1917) played jazz in Kingston, Jamaica before joining the RAF as a radar engineer during the Second World War. Back home he opened the Bop City record shop and began making ever-more powerful amplifiers in the '40s. Soon he was building for sound system operators including **Tom The Great Sebastian**, **Duke Reid** and **Clement Dodd**. In 1963 he built the equipment used at Dodd's Studio One, cradle of ska, rocksteady and reggae hits by **Bob Marley**, **The Skatalites**, **Burning Spear** and others. Jones led his own bands, designed Jamaica's first traffic light system and wrote newspaper columns into his late nineties.

SINGER/GUITARIST **FRED COLE** (b.1948) began his musical life in the middle '60s, and would traverse garage rock, bubblegum, punk and country in bands including **The Lords**, **The Weeds**, **The Lollipop Shoppe**, **Zipper**, **King Bee** and **Western Front**. In 1987 in Oregon he began his cult project **Dead Moon** with his bassist wife **Toody**: they would release 10 LPs before the group ended in 2006. The couple would later form **Pierced Arrows**.

BLUE-EYED SOUL singer **WAYNE COCHRAN** (b.1939) played bass for **Otis Redding** before signing with King records, alongside his inspiration, **James Brown**. He formed his touring revue the **C.C. Riders** and played Vegas, where he earned the sobriquet 'The White Knight of Soul' thanks in part to his impressive pompadour and wild jumpsuits. His death-disc Last Kiss was successfully recorded by **J. Frank Wilson & The Cavaliers** (1954) and **Pearl Jam** (1999). In 1981 he became a minister in Georgia; in 2001 he played two reunion shows with the C.C. Riders.

JAZZ voice and lyricist **JON HENDRICKS** (b.1921) sang on the radio with **Art Tatum** as a teenager. After serving in the Second World War, he studied law before joining **Annie Ross** and **Dave Lambert** in jazz trio **Lambert, Hendricks & Ross** in 1957, exploring the art of vocalese with Hendricks composing words for extant instrumental pieces on LPs including *Sing A Song Of Basie*. Having worked with collaborators including **Manhattan Transfer**, **The Warlocks** (AKA **Grateful Dead**) and **Thelonious Monk**, he continued to record and create, one of his last works involving writing lyrics for **Miles Davis**'s *Miles Ahead*.

JAZZ AND GOSPEL voice **DELLA REESE** (B.1931) sang with **Mahalia Jackson**'s vocal group as a juvenile before beginning her jazz recording career in 1953. In 1957 she scored a Top 20 pop hit with And That Reminds Me, followed two years later by the Number 2 Don't You Know? Her recorded output slowed after the mid '60s, but Reese later found success on screen, hosting her own US talk show, acting alongside **Redd Foxx** and **Elliott Gould** in film and taking a lead role on godly TV fantasy Touched By An Angel.

Clive Prior

Della Reese: star of vocal booth and screen.

Henry Diltz/Getty Images, Getty Images (2), Michael Ross/Lickerish

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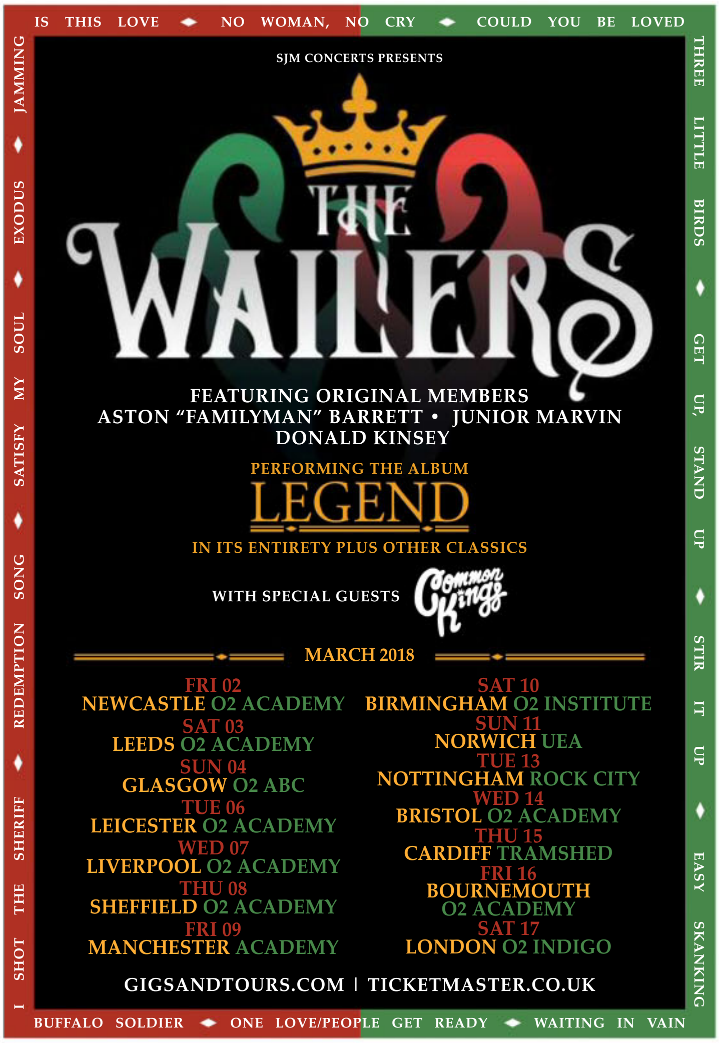

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THE MOJO INTERVIEW

Written off **when Uncle Tupelo split** and Wilco sputtered, he spliced The Clash, **Can and country**, while **battling pills** and trolls. **Tough guy**? "You gotta **carry your load**," reckons **Jeff Tweedy**.

Interview by **BOB MEHR** • Portrait by **ZORAN ORLIC**

MIDWAY THROUGH A TWO-HOUR interview, Jeff Tweedy suddenly shuts his eyes, slumps back in his chair, and appears to pass out. Perhaps sensing the mild panic on MOJO's face, he quickly steels himself, straightens up and apologises.

"I'm sorry… I've got a migraine," he says, citing a condition that's plagued him since childhood. "I should have told you – it's just hard for me to hold my head up sometimes."

A light snow has overtaken Chicago on this early November day. Inside Wilco's North Side studio loft and headquarters, Tweedy has spent much of the morning fighting off illness, huddled with longtime producer Tom Schick, going over recently recorded tracks.

Seated on a couch, clad in a black jumper, his grey-flecked hair is long, extending past his shoulders. "I'm letting it grow until Trump is out of office," chuckles Tweedy, a friend of fellow Chicagoan, former President Obama.

As Tweedy considers mixes, it's not clear where the songs may turn up – possibly for a solo LP – but he notes Wilco will be taking off much of 2018, freeing him for other engagements, starting with an acoustic tour of the UK in late January. "Jeff Tweedy" is still a relatively recent incarnation for this native son of Belleville, Illinois (June's wryly titled *Together At Last* was his first 'solo' album). First there was alt-country avatars Uncle Tupelo, then (from 1994 to now) acclaimed alt-rockers Wilco. Collaborations have included (with members of The Jayhawks and Soul Asylum) Golden Smog, the Woody Guthrie/*Mermaid Avenue* project with Billy Bragg, experimental combo Loose Fur, and Tweedy – a family band with his eldest son, Spencer.

Wilco's first two albums – 1995's *A.M.* and 1996's *Being There* – have just re-emerged, loaded with unreleased songs, alternate versions and live material. Tweedy doesn't often listen to his younger self. "But when I heard these [reissues], I was pleasantly surprised," he says. "It felt like time has been their friend."

Has time been Tweedy's friend? In August, he celebrated his 50th birthday; in September, his 83-year-old father Bob died (following his mother, Jo Ann, who passed in 2006). His wife Sue Miller has been fighting cancer. Perhaps these life markers have him in a reflective mood as he explores subjects he's often been reluctant to revisit, including his fraught partnership with fellow singer-songwriter Jay Farrar in Uncle Tupelo and the end of his relationship with Wilco collaborator Jay Bennett, who was fired during the making of the group's gold-selling breakthrough *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, and who died in 2009 from an accidental overdose of painkillers, while in the midst of suing his former band.

Tweedy also opens up about his own ➢

WE'RE NOT WORTHY

Mavis Staples on her "brother" Jeff Tweedy…

"Tweedy and I are a lot alike in our hearts. We're both committed to family. When I first met him, that's what sold me. I tell ya, Tweedy's a genius. I've watched him write, put songs together and I'm always amazed. The Lord's blessed me with geniuses – I've worked with Ry Cooder, Curtis Mayfield, Prince. I wouldn't trade nothing for Jeff Tweedy."

drug addiction and recovery, and how Wilco's career – even after 10 albums, seven Grammy nominations and two awards – still requires dodging the slings and arrows of public opinion.

"When you've been at it this long, it's never easy," offers Tweedy. "It's not supposed to be."

Your father, Bob, passed away a couple of months ago. Was he a music fan?

He was, but he was not a voracious consumer. In fact, he would kinda find one song a year that he loved and listen to it over and over. Like Southern Nights by Glen Campbell, or It's Hard To Be Humble by Mac Davis. We played all those songs at his wake. He'd latch onto one or two things at a time. Same thing with my music; he kinda liked Hummingbird and Casino Queen. Those were the two songs I always had to play when he came to shows.

His path in life – as a father, husband, and working man – was set very early. Was that something you grew up wanting to avoid?

He got my mom pregnant in high school and they both dropped out. He got a job with the railroad, cleaning diesel engines. At some point, someone with the railroad recognised he was pretty smart and sent him to a training programme to learn how to program computers, in like 1960, when they first automated the switching yard. He eventually became the head of the signals department for the Alton & Southern Railway. He was a pretty brilliant guy. But my dad was motivated very simply by the desire to not fail at taking care of his family. It wasn't so much that I wanted to avoid that. My feeling growing up was the thing to be avoided was working on the railroad. My family – my uncles, my cousins, my brothers – all ended up doing that.

You were an 'accidental baby', right? Your siblings were much older.

I came 10 years later than my youngest brother. My sister was old enough to really be like another parent or something. I realised much later in life that a lot of my early memories of my mom are probably my sister, 'cos she took me everywhere. I also put together later that maybe my first sense of abandonment was when my sister went away to college and I became a truly only child in that household.

Fair to say you were an indulged child then, maternally speaking?

I have no way of picturing what it would be like to *not* be an exalted golden child, and ultimately an uncontested Oedipal victor (*laughs*). My mom really looked at me as a companion.

You must've gotten a lot of records handed down to you.

My parents had Johnny Cash records, and country stuff that I heard. My sister's record collection from the mid-'60s was tuneful pop stuff: Beatles, Monkees, Herman's Hermits. And my brother's records I inherited, when I was like 10 around '77, were pretty adventurous. It was Amon Düül, Kraftwerk, Aphrodite's Child, Hawkwind, Tangerine Dream, a whole crate of that. That all shaped me, and still seem to be the main arteries of what I do to this day.

How did you discover punk rock?

Going to the grocery store with my mom in the late '70s and reading Rolling Stone and Creem magazines from cover to cover while she shopped. I would read Lester Bangs articles and came to a lot of punk rock through that writing. I had a vivid relationship with Clash records way before I ever heard them. I knew I wanted to like it. Then in 8th grade I went and lived with my sister in Arizona, ostensibly so I could play baseball during the winter – that's what they told me. I think my mom and dad were having some problems, and I was shipped out of state to let them figure it out. I went to junior high in Tucson for one year and, being closer to the West Coast, things like Black Flag and the Dead Kennedys were bleeding into that little community more than they were in Belleville.

You came back to Belleville for high school and that's where you met your eventual partner in Uncle Tupelo, Jay Farrar. You were the only two punk rock fans in school?

We were both in the same English class, and one of the early assignments was to write a little essay about your neighbour and explain who they are. We didn't interview each other but the people who did stood up and said, "This is Jeff… his favourite band is the Ramones" and "This is Jay… his favourite band is the Sex Pistols." It was like, well, I guess we have no choice but to say hi.

Farrar is a somewhat notoriously shy and withdrawn figure – seems like a hard person to become friends with.

It was never a comfortable, easy relationship. But he had a lot of things I wanted. He had an ability to express himself with an instrument, he was in a band with his brothers and they were into punk rock and new wave. He had a world that was not particularly welcoming to me, but I wasn't going to pass up the opportunity to be around it.

Uncle Tupelo would come to be revered for your twinning of punk with country-folk music.

We weren't the first to discover or make any of those connections, but we were embracing the idea that it was all the same thing. Punk rock was a self-liberation of some sort. I don't have to be a virtuoso, I don't have to be in Yes, I can be this. And folk music was liberating yourself from your rural environment, and actually being a poet, being free to be expressive in that way.

A LIFE IN PICTURES

Jeff's journey: understanding Tweedy.

1 3D visionary: Tweedy (far left) in his junior year at Belleville High, Illinois, 1984.

2 They got drunk: Uncle Tupelo, circa 1990 (from left) Jay Farrar, Tweedy, Mike Heidorn.

3 Being there: Jeff with Wilco bandmate Jay Bennett, 1997. "An incredible asset… [he] could play a lot of instruments well."

4 Filming Wilco movie I Am Trying To Break Your Heart, 2002: "At that point the relationship in the studio was not a tenable one," says Jeff.

5 "Rock'n'roll is a ritual about an audience and a band providing something together": Greek Theatre, Berkeley, CA, August 27, 2007.

6 "The records get better and better": Wilco, Chicago, 2005 (from left) Glenn Kotche, Nels Cline, Mikael Jorgensen, Tweedy, Pat Sansone, John Stirratt.

7 With president-in-waiting and friend Barack Obama, then Senator for Illinois, at Farm Aid, September 18, 2005.

8 Tweedy with son Spencer, a drummer who's played on Jeff's productions for such as Mavis Staples, 2014.

9 "It seems so obvious that everybody is weak and struggling": Tweedy in Holland, December 6, 1996.

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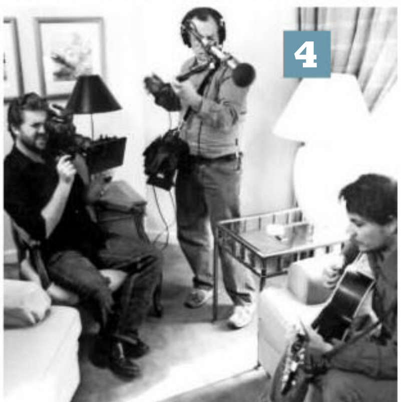

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Seth Poppel/Yearbook Library, Retna/Avalon, Getty Images (4), Alamy, Capital

There's not that much difference between the overall attitude and disposition of Hank Williams and Joe Strummer.

Uncle Tupelo was a fairly boozy band. But you quit drinking early on. Was that a result of having come up in what you've described as an alcoholic home?

Getting drunk was a source of shame for me, considering I'd grown up with this idea that as long as I didn't drink mom would be happy. I would be the one person in her life that didn't drink. It was not easy for me pursue oblivion without a deep sense of shame.

It didn't stop me from doing it, or enjoying it sometimes. But my sense was this is bad. At some point drinking did become a problem in my relationships with my bandmates. I thought if I can quit – if I don't have to go to treatment or anything – then I should just do that. I was 21 or 22 when I stopped drinking. But as my life progressed, just not drinking wasn't going to fix my problems. Because I ended up having issues with other substances.

You progressed dramatically as a songwriter in Uncle Tupelo. Was there a growing sense of competition with Farrar?

I didn't look at it as competition. I looked at it as this thing that Jay and I did, and we were going to do it forever, and we were gonna get better at it. And if I got better at it, then the band was better for it. Jay was always the best musician, Jay had this incredible voice, Jay was this force. I never looked at him as having any kind of vulnerability… that I could infringe upon that in any way. So blindly, like a dog, like an excited puppy, I wanted to get better, so Jay would be happy that I was better. And instead, I just stepped on his toes and got into his turf. I didn't know that or realise it then. It became harder for him to accept [the band] as a partnership as the outside world began to acknowledge that it was a partnership.

Was signing to Sire/Warner Bros for 1993's *Anodyne* an easy decision?

No, it was a pretty big debate. Like lot of bands at that time, there was some perception that you were selling out. Jay probably felt it morally repugnant to be associated with a label that had anything do with, like, Madonna. But I felt like we'd earned the opportunity. And they gave us a deal that said we could do whatever we wanted. That's what we did – I mean, we went and recorded *Anodyne* live in the studio.

> "I was **fuelled by a resentment** towards things that **were being said** about me **by fans** and **rock critics**."

Although Uncle Tupelo seemed on the cusp of breaking out, Farrar quit the band suddenly. A shock to you?

I was shocked and felt betrayed and it confirmed my deepest suspicions and insecurities that Jay hated me. I thought, "Why would you quit? Why would you do this now?" And I still don't understand the answer to that question, 25 years later. I don't really care any more or think about it very often. But there's not a very good or clean explanation other than Jay just kinda wanted me out of the picture.

Did it hurt when the first Wilco album, *A.M.*, was overshadowed by *Trace*, the debut from Jay's band Son Volt? Did you feel like you were being viewed as the lesser talent?

Everybody looked at it that way – the record company looked at it that way. They said to me openly, "[*A.M.*] is gonna come out a few months before [*Trace*] and really set up Jay's record." Somebody said that out loud to me (*laughs*). I was like, "Um, that's not why I fucking made it."

But that was actually the turning point for you and for Wilco, wasn't it?

I had tried to hang onto to my piece of Uncle Tupelo. I definitely did that with the first Wilco record. I still wanted my fans from Uncle Tupelo, I wanted that audience. And that wasn't my audience – that was an audience that cared about the combination of the two of us. I decided that's not what I'm here to do any more. I was into music before I ever I met Jay Farrar. I love music and I'm going to start doing all the things that I love to do. It was the first time I realised I'm not making music to stand next to Jay's music or anyone's.

And, to be honest, I was fuelled by a resentment towards things that were being said about me by fans and rock critics and the fact that I was generally being dismissed. The best thing that's ever happened to me is having people tell me I'm not as good, or a lightweight, or all of those things. Well, OK, I'll try harder next time… and you'll be fucking sorry (*laughs*).

***Being There* coincides with your marriage to [Chicago rock club owner] Sue Miller and the birth of your first child. Did suddenly having adult responsibilities impact on your music?**

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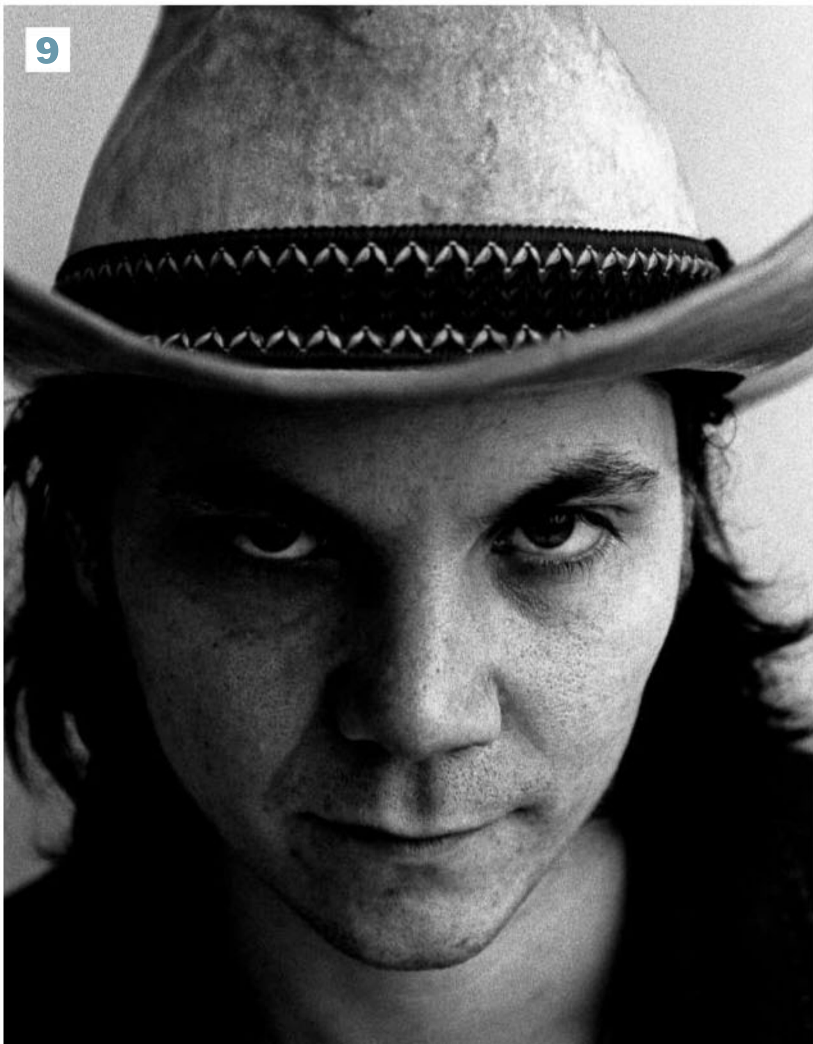

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“A **nurse told me**, ‘I’m happy to find out that **you actually are a musician**, because we thought **you were delusional**.’”

Well, I was lucky enough to have a grown-ass woman taking care of me, because I wasn’t particularly adult. I’m still not particularly adult in a lot of ways. *Being There* is definitely me coming to terms with the notion that I can’t let music be the only important thing to me any more, ’cos I have to be a dad. Until then, I never saw myself as anything other than an entity defined by records and rock’n’roll and music.

Songs like Misunderstood, Sunken Treasure, The Lonely 1 seem to be speaking about the complexities of the artist/fan dynamic.

I was contemplating how unrecognised and unappreciated that is, in general, as an artistic transaction. That the collaborator who does 50 per cent of the work doesn’t ever get acknowledged. Without a listener, without another consciousness on the other end, records don’t mean anything.

You grew into a somewhat confrontational figure on-stage around this time – there was a show in Shepherd’s Bush in London in 1997 where you famously castigated the audience.

I’m not particularly proud of whatever happened in London. We probably were playing a boring show… but that was a shitty audience, whether we were good or not. Also, I blame the British music press. The British music press would hype things up, creating an audience that was full of curiosity seekers there to see the thing that was being hyped, as opposed to the thing that was actually in front of them. I felt there was an audience there that wasn’t negotiating in good faith – they wanted something other than what we were. Besides, I’ve always felt if you turn up to a rock’n’roll show thinking it’s about the band providing something, you’re wrong. Rock’n’roll ritual is about an audience and a band providing together. You gotta carry your load.

The next long-player, 1999’s *Summerteeth*, was remarkably, nakedly autobiographical. You seem comfortable expressing your desperation…

It’s probably that same overwhelming sense of well-being from childhood, thinking that every utterance and all of my emotions are of interest to everybody (*chuckles*). I do have an innate comfort level with being vulnerable. I don’t quite understand being embarrassed or insecure about being perceived as weak. I just don’t get it. It seems so fucking obvious that everybody is weak, that everybody is struggling.

A lot of artists don’t want to show that side of themselves.

People want to appear to be in control – that’s one of the only things they can control, the *perception* that they’re in control. But they always fall. They always fail at some point. And that’s when I like them more.

Fair to say that [multi-instrumentalist] Jay Bennett helped shape the sound of Wilco during this time? Were you looking for that type of collaborator?

Before Jay, my focus and energy would usually outlast everyone else’s. I would always be the last one obsessing about a mix or still pushing forward on something. It turned out that Jay was still there at the end of most days. (*Hesitating*) I always have a tough time not bristling at the idea that Jay was some sort of sonic shaper of what happened, because I don’t think that’s accurate – without diminishing any of his contributions or his role. Jay was an incredible asset – to have somebody that could play a lot of different instruments well, and had a lot more experience in the studio. I could say, “I want to hear it like this,” and he had the expertise and understanding of how to do that.

Do you think the perception of his role in the band was distorted by [the documentary] I Am Trying to Break Your Heart?

The focus the movie really put on Jay and I, it diminished [longtime bassist] John Stirratt’s role and everybody else’s contributions to the band. I don’t think doing the film was a

"This is the thing that I love to do, and people keep letting me do it": Jeff Tweedy in Wilco's studio on Chicago's North Side, November 10, 2017.

Zoran Orlic

mistake, but I underestimated how concrete things become in people's minds based on them seeing it in a movie. The irony of the film is the actual making of [fourth Wilco album] *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* isn't in it at all. The weeks that [mixer] Jim O'Rourke and myself spent in the studio, that's what the record is, that's what it ended up being. And that's not in the movie at all, 'cos they'd run out of money to film stuff.

At that point, the relationship with Jay in the studio was not a tenable one. That record would have never come out the way it did with him in the band. That being said, Jay and I co-wrote a bunch of those songs and I don't ever wanna not give somebody the credit that they deserve. It's hard for me to say some of these things… because they sound bitter or negative…

And probably complicated by the fact that Bennett is no longer around.

Right. And there's also a certain amount of ambivalence about how Jay behaved after the band. He was out of the band for like six years before he passed away. And all this was still this topic for him, and not necessarily a topic for us.

You found yourself addicted to painkillers around the time of [2004's] *A Ghost Is Born*. How did you fall into that?

I was prescribed painkillers for lots of different reasons, bullshit reasons sometimes. But my doctors wanted to treat my migraines. Eventually, at the local pharmacy, a guy who was a fan, started to double or triple my prescription because he saw that my name was on it. He thought he was doing me a favour. And he offered to help out if I couldn't get a prescription for some reason. I took him up on that eventually. I'd go through the drive-thru and get a Ziploc bag with hundreds of painkillers. I was worried the guy would get in trouble, but he was the one doing the counting. And that one pharmacy alone would sell hundreds and hundreds of thousands of those pills a year, so they could get away with a few hundred going missing.

You ended up going to rehab as a result.

It wasn't just the addiction, it was mental health issues that put me in a position where anything would've been better than the place I was in. That's invariably the state of mind that people who get treated successfully reach. I was at a point where I thought, "Even if I don't play music ever again, but I'm happy, that would be better than this."

And what was rehab like? Did who you were count for anything in there?

They thought I was crazy, at least initially. At the intake, they asked what I did. Told them I'm a musician. After a couple days I think one of the nurses came up to me and said, "I'm really happy to find out that you actually are a musician, because we thought you were delusional." One time, some other patient, another addict, figured out who I was, and he wanted to know where we kept our gear (*laughs*). "Where do you guys rehearse?" "Fuck man, I ain't telling you."

RADIOCURES

Jeff Tweedy in three albums.

THE INCEPTION!

Uncle Tupelo

★★★★

No Depression

(ROCKVILLE, 1990)

The debut that defined a genre, due to its particular musical and psychic confluence: at the end of a decade glossed by greed, its raw songs' emotional power was forged in punk rage and folk song purity, lending the 'Depression' of The Carter Family's title song new resonance. In Tweedy and Jay Farrar's complementary voices, this fusion evinced hope amid the darkness, if only through the bottom of a glass: "Whiskey bottle over Jesus/Not forever, just for now." *KC*

THE REINVENTION!

Wilco

★★★★★

Yankee Hotel Foxtrot

(NONESUCH, 2002)

The record that got Wilco dropped from Warners, only to be picked up by another arm of the same label and go on to sell half a million copies, *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* signalled Tweedy's own psychic dissonance with songs as starkly lovely as Jesus Etc. or as melodically robust as War On War dissolving into static noise that blooms and fizzes – like film burn on the big screen. *JB*

THE PRODUCTION!

Mavis Staples

★★★★

If All I Was Was Black

(ANTI , 2017)

Tweedy's work as a producer has no better advertisement than his four LPs with the soul family Staples, one posthumous beauty for Pops (2015's *Don't Lose This*), the rest with Mavis, this being the latest in a seven-year relationship. As main songwriter, Tweedy frames her sociopolitical agenda – racism, poverty, police brutality, pleas for universal love and tolerance – in warm band settings that allow for a voice that's gentler these days. But there is bite too (his guitar on Try Harder), and uplift (We Go High). He clearly understands her. *GB*

You've noted that there are people – not so much critics, but fans, or internet trolls, perhaps – who will say things like, "I liked Wilco's records better when Jeff Tweedy was on drugs."

To be charitable, that's probably just dark humour. People who say that stuff don't really mean it. But, in general, that is a fucking shameful, idiotic thing to say in public. If you're drunk listening to records with your buddy in your living room saying something like that, it would be totally fine. But because of social media we live in everyone's living rooms now. And some people don't realise what they're saying out loud essentially. And also, it's bullshit… because the records get better and better. Every time I make a record it's better than the last one.

I'm sure there are a lot of good things about being a successful, established band like Wilco. What are the drawbacks?

We're never going to be a band that no one's ever heard of again. When no one knows you, there's a great opportunity to create an impression and then subvert that impression. We don't have that ability any more. Plus, the more records you make, the longer you're around, the more you become a band people feel compelled to weigh in on – because there's a new Wilco record and you have to have an opinion. I don't give a fuck about your opinion, 'cos this record isn't for you, it never was, and you wouldn't be paying attention to us if it wasn't for all the other people who genuinely care about us. My feeling is there are no instant classics anyway. Records exist and people find them over the years, over time, and that's what determines their value.

You've worked as a producer for a range of artists from Low to Richard Thompson to White Denim. But you've had a particularly fruitful collaboration with Mavis Staples – why has that worked so well?

We had a real easy rapport from the first times we hung out. There's a familial element – she loves [my wife] Susie and thinks of my sons Spencer and Sammy as her grandkids. She's adopted us all as a part of her family. And I really work hard to make her feel comfortable in the studio. Maybe she just sees something in me. I dunno. I think I am a genuinely nice person. (*Long pause*) I will note, however, that genuinely nice people don't normally have to tell people they're genuinely nice (*laughs*).

You recently turned 50 – does that milestone have you looking back on your legacy?

The only thing I allow myself to feel is gratitude. I'm still pretty young for the amount of stuff I've been able to do and be a part of. Being in Uncle Tupelo would've been more than enough for a lot of people – as a musician to just have that experience would've been great. But then there's Wilco, the Woody Guthrie stuff, the Mavis records, all of these things I've packed into this amount of time. Mostly, I feel grateful that I'm healthy and feel more inspired and more capable of doing this every day. This is the thing that I love to do, and people keep letting me.

Jeff Tweedy tours the UK and Ireland, January 30-February 3.

Christmas bonuses: (from left) Paul McCartney, John Lennon, Ringo Starr and George Harrison go wild for Rave magazine, 1964.

From Me To Yule

THE BEATLES' Christmas fan club flexis are some of the most cherished recordings the group ever made. But these screwball seasonal gifts to their most loyal devotees carry more enigmatic messages about the group's journey – from pop larks through expanded consciousness to, finally, their growing apart. Beatles scholar **KEVIN HOWLETT** talks turkey.

NARRATOR: The boys arrive at BBC House.
THREE LOUD KNOCKS ON A DOOR
MAN FROM THE BBC: [Sternly] What do you want?
THE BEATLES: We have been granted permission, Oh Wise One.
MAN FROM THE BBC: Ah! Pass in peace.
ANOTHER MAN FROM THE BBC: An audition will be held at 10am, Wednesday the 1st, in the fluffy rehearsal rooms. Bring your own.

THAT OPENING SCENE FROM THE BEATLES FAN CLUB Christmas record for 1967 spoofs the reverence the BBC demanded from anyone hoping to broadcast on its hallowed airwaves in the days of its hegemony. Of course, when they recorded the sketch The Beatles hardly needed permission to pass anywhere. *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and All You Need Is Love had confirmed their position in the vanguard of popular culture. Yet in November 1967 they were making fun of a time, only a few years before, when pop music was viewed as merely a scruffy subset of show business. Back then, The Beatles had worked very hard to gain entry to the establishment. By 1967, they were subverting it.

The cheeky larking about on the seven fan club records they made between 1963 and 1969 is as engaging now as it was then, but the recordings also serve as reminders of how things stood at the end of each full year of The Beatles' recording career. In 1963 and 1964, there are send-ups and much giggling among themselves, but the ➢

Mark Hayward Collection

BRIAN EPSTEIN Presents
THE BEATLES Christmas Show
THE BEATLES
BILLY J. KRAMER THE DAKOTAS
ROLF HARRIS
THE FOURMOST
CILLA BLACK
TOMMY QUICKLY
THE BARRON KNIGHTS featuring DUKE D'MOND
DEVISED AND PRODUCED BY PETER YOLLAND
ODEON HAMMERSMITH
24th DECEMBER to 16th JANUARY
ON THE STAGE
BRIAN EPSTEIN Presents
ANOTHER BEATLES CHRISTMAS SHOW
THE BEATLES
FREDDIE and the DREAMERS
JIMMY SAVILE SOUNDS INCORPORATED
Paul
George
Ringo
John
MERRY CHRISTMAS

Rockin' around the Christmas tree: (above) the Fabs deck the hall; (insets left) posters for their regular Christmas shows; Xmas card for fans; (right, from top) emptying the post bags at the Fan Club, November '63; the panto, Finsbury Park Astoria, late '63/early '64; (bottom) Christmas show tickets.

≺ group is still tethered to the solid ground of show biz. By 1968's offering it is clear The Beatles have rocketed out of that orbit forever. Each disc is an unintentional annual state of the union report on the group: compare the level of co-operation involved in the production of the 1967 disc to the splintered and uneven contributions stitched together in 1969.

Today's instantaneous and direct access to the personal lives of pop stars through social media could never have been imagined by music fans in the 1960s, when an important relationship between The Beatles and their fans was nurtured mainly through the mail. Upon payment of the annual subscription, members of The Official Beatles Fan Club became "Beatle People" and each Christmas from 1963 to 1969, members living in the UK were treated to the free gift of a flexi disc containing a seasonal message of thanks. Thirty thousand were distributed in 1963. By 1965, the number of fan club members receiving a record had increased to 70,000. The flexi discs were ultra-thin and bendy, less expensive to manufacture and cheaper to send in the post, but they could never match the sound quality of a standard vinyl record. It was recommended to avoid a flexi slipping to place it on top of a 7-inch single and weigh it down with a coin on the label. This was not hi-fi.

The man behind the Christmas flexi giveaways was Tony Barrow, head of public relations at NEMS – the company run by Brian Epstein. For the 1963 and 1964 messages, his scripts were toyed with by the group rather as a cat teases a mouse. Before the recording of the second disc, a newsletter printed in an edition of monthly fan magazine The Beatles Book promised the special gift for club members in 1964 would be "something everybody will like. But we're not saying a word!" The next issue revealed "the big secret is out!" It was another Christmas record. After that, fans expected the annual messages to continue and, no matter what, a new one did drop through letter boxes every Christmas from 1963 to 1969. At the end of 1970 – the year the group ceased recording together – a vinyl LP for fans, called *From Then To You*, included all the material on the flexis. Given a simpler title – *The Beatles Christmas Album* – and with a different cover, it was also distributed to members of the US Fan Club. Recently remastered at Abbey Road for a limited edition 7 x 7-inch vinyl box set, the Christmas Records have never sounded as good as they do now. Coin balancing no longer required.

"We've Gone Right Off Jelly Babies"

YEAR 1: The Beatles Christmas Record – 1963
Recorded October 17, 1963 – Studio Two, EMI Recording Studios, Abbey Road, London

Sincere Good Wishes
for
Christmas and the New Year
from
John
Paul
George
Ringo

THIS WAS RECORDED AT THE END of a session for their fifth Parlophone single I Want To Hold Your Hand/This Boy. The disc opens with an arrangement of the carol Good King Wenceslas with references to American film star Betty Grable and Henry Hall, who was on the air as leader of the BBC Dance Orchestra from the 1930s to the early 1960s. "Hello, this is John speaking with his voice," begins the first message of thanks. Among the "gear things" that had happened during this hectic year, John declares "the biggest thrill" to be the bill-topping live TV performance on Sunday Night At The London Palladium on October 13. With an audience of 15 million viewers, this appearance was regarded as a significant marker for an act hoping to rise through the ranks of British show business. John also highlights their subsequent invitation to play for the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret at the Royal Variety Performance – a regal seal of approval for their charm offensive.

Paul takes an opportunity to try to halt the bombardment by Jelly Babies. "We've been inundated," George had revealed on TV in August. "They tend to throw them when we're on stage. I got one in my eye which wasn't very nice." "We've gone right off Jelly Babies," Paul advised fans. "But we still like Peppermint Creams, Chocolate Drops and Dolly Mixtures!" He also decides that the group most enjoyed "going into the recording studio to make new records." Next, Ringo sings a swinging version of Good King Wenceslas before George thanks Bettina Rose and Anne Collingham, who were described on the disc's sleeve as Joint National Secretaries of the fan club. In fact, Tony Barrow had invented the name Anne Collingham to represent several workers in the London office, who would masquerade as the fictional character in photographs.

After recording this fan club message, even more "gear things" happened by Christmas. Their jewellery-rattling appearance at the Royal Variety Performance was a triumph, *With The Beatles* replaced

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their debut LP at the top of the album chart and I Want To Hold Your Hand was a Christmas Number 1 in the UK.

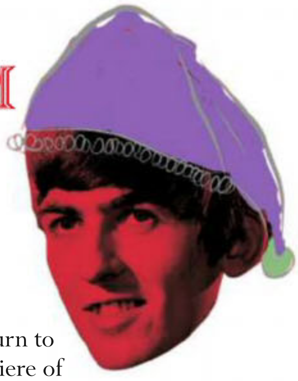
"The Usual Rubbish, But It Won't Cost Much"

YEAR 2: Another Beatles Christmas Record – 1964
Recorded October 26, 1964 – Studio Two,
EMI Recording Studios, Abbey Road, London

The Official
Beatles FAN CLUB
45 R.P.M.
Another
Beatles Christmas Record

THE FIRST BEATLES TRACK TO use the sound of singing through a comb and toilet paper was not Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds. It was the recording of Jingle Bells that opens this record. During the final session for *Beatles For Sale*, the group amused each other by misreading Tony Barrow's "bad handwrota", as John described it. There was much to be grateful for in 1964. Barrow's sleevenote for this flexi disc reported "another splendid period of world-wide pop supremacy". He was not exaggerating. Their international breakthrough had been consolidated by tours through North America, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. "Those airport receptions knocked us out, man," Ringo jokes. Indeed, many thousands had turned out to welcome The Beatles wherever they travelled. "It was like being the Queen," Paul recalled in 1969. "In Liverpool, we came in from the airport and there were crowds lining the route."

> "FOR ALL THE PEOPLE IN HOSPITAL... PLENTY OF JAM JARS BY THE RAVELLERS."
>
> George, Xmas Flexi '67



That occasion had been for the group's return to their home town to attend the movie premiere of A Hard Day's Night. George confirms that they will start making another film in February.

Paul thanks fans for buying their records – "I don't know where we'd be without you, really." "In the army, perhaps," suggests John before thanking fans for buying his book of drawings, doggerel and prose, In His Own Write. "There's another one out pretty soon, it says here. Hope you buy that too. It'll be the usual rubbish, but it won't cost much. That's the bargain we're going to strike up!" The messages of thanks are rounded off with a rowdy version of the traditional song Oh, Can You Wash Your Father's Shirt, banged out on the black keys of a piano.

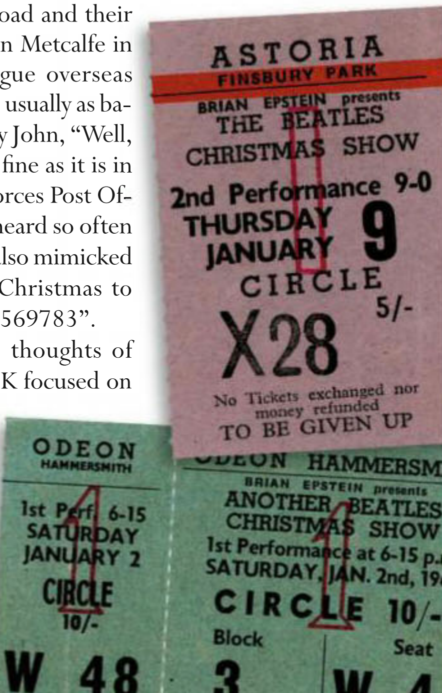
"What Are We Gonna Do That's Out Of Copyright?"

YEAR 3: The Beatles Third Christmas Record – 1965
Recorded November 8, 1965 – Studio Two,
EMI Recording Studios, Abbey Road, London

The Official
Beatles FAN CLUB
33⅓
The Beatles Third Christmas Record

IN HIS SLEEVENOTE, TONY Barrow stated the Christmas record for fans had now "become a tradition". Their first attempt for '65 had a Barrow script too, but proved unsatisfactory – although extracts later appeared in print. Consequently, having completed Think For Yourself for *Rubber Soul*, the group joked around the microphones in the middle of the night, because "we gotta thank everyone for all the presents this year and for buying the records." Yesterday, The Beatles' most acclaimed song of the year, is mercilessly lampooned at the beginning and end of the message. John parodies the BBC radio programme Two Way Family Favourites. A Sunday lunchtime institution, the massively popular show linked up with British Forces radio networks to broadcast messages and record requests from service personnel stationed abroad and their families at home. Invariably, Jean Metcalfe in London would ask her colleague overseas about the weather. The reply was usually as banal as the response caricatured by John, "Well, here in Munich it's not quite as fine as it is in London." The BFPO (British Forces Post Office) numbers of military bases heard so often throughout the programme are also mimicked as The Beatles wish a Happy Christmas to "those of you abroad in BOR 24569783".

Christmas festivities led to thoughts of New Year's Eve, which in the UK focused on traditional Scottish celebrations. John put words to a traditional Scottish air delivered with a nod to the popular folk duo Robin Hall And Jimmie MacGregor, known for ➢


ASTORIA
FINSBURY PARK
BRIAN EPSTEIN presents
THE BEATLES
CHRISTMAS SHOW
2nd Performance 9-0
THURSDAY
JANUARY 9
CIRCLE
5/-
X28
No Tickets exchanged nor money refunded
TO BE GIVEN UP
ODEON
HAMMERSMITH
1st Perf 6-15
SATURDAY
JANUARY 2
CIRCLE
10/-
W 48
ODEON HAMMERSM
BRIAN EPSTEIN presents
ANOTHER BEATLES
CHRISTMAS SHOW
1st Performance at 6-15 p.
SATURDAY JAN. 2nd, 19
CIRCLE 10/-
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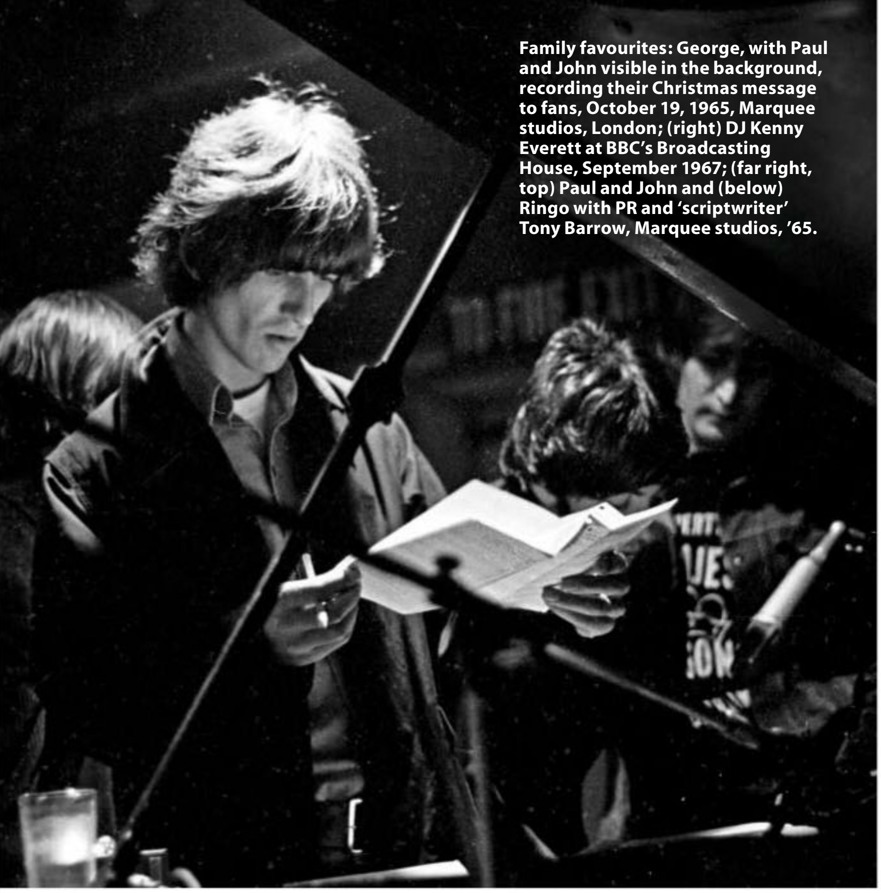
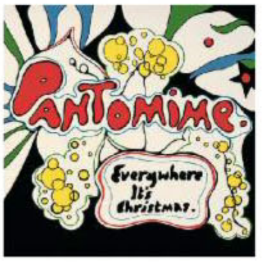


Family favourites: George, with Paul and John visible in the background, recording their Christmas message to fans, October 19, 1965, Marquee studios, London; (right) DJ Kenny Everett at BBC's Broadcasting House, September 1967; (far right, top) Paul and John and (below) Ringo with PR and 'scriptwriter' Tony Barrow, Marquee studios, '65.

≺ their novelty hit Football Crazy. Auld Lang Syne is performed in the croaky vocal style of Barry McGuire on his recent US Number 1 Eve Of Destruction, with some references to its apocalyptic words. When Paul asks, "What are we gonna do that's out of copyright?", John replies, "How about We'll Gather Lilacs In An Old Brown Shoe?" Did that joke inspire the title of a 1969 Beatles B-side?

"The Beatles Are Back In Existence"

YEAR 4: Pantomime: Everywhere It's Christmas – The Beatles Fourth Christmas Record – 1966 Recorded November 25, 1966 – Dick James Music, New Oxford Street, London



FOLLOWING THE LAST CONCERT of their North American tour in San Francisco, the group took a three-month break from being Beatles. Customary duties for the year – a new film, a second LP, a single for Christmas, a British tour – were all dodged. The November 1966 edition of The Beatles Monthly Book expressed the concerns of fans: "Naturally, the big question in everyone's mind is 'Will The Beatles be giving us a fourth Christmas Record this year?'" Following five months away from the studio, the group at last returned to record a version of Strawberry Fields Forever on November 24, 1966. The next day, they worked on a carefully scripted "pantomime". "We thought it was time we had an entirely different approach," Paul reflected in 1966. "He did the most work on it," Ringo acknowledged. Paul even painted the picture on the sleeve.

This time fan club members were treated to three original musical pieces – Everywhere It's Christmas, Orowayna and Please Don't Bring Your Banjo Back – and several skits. The Beatles drop into a variety of accents for seemingly unrelated scenes located in Corsica, the Swiss Alps, Felpin Mansions and on board HMS Tremendous. John and Paul play the parts of Podgy The Bear and Jasper in a curious dialogue about matches, candles and buns. Paul's character voice for Jasper resembles his Rupert The Bear portrayal heard in the animated short film Rupert And The Frog Song released in 1984.

With a note of relief, the fan club newsletter in the December 1966 issue of The Beatles Monthly Book reported: "It's quite possible that for the past couple of months you have felt that The Beatles had ceased to exist. The Beatles are back in existence."

"Get Wonder-Lust For Your Trousers!"

YEAR 5: Christmas Time (Is Here Again) – The Beatles Fifth Christmas Record – 1967 Recorded November 28, 1967 – Studio Three, EMI Recording Studios, Abbey Road, London

THE BEATLES WORKED FOR NINE hours in Abbey Road to produce their most elaborate festive production. At its core is the polished recording of Christmas Time (Is Here Again), which occurs in three short bursts throughout the record. Decades later, the song was remixed for inclusion on the December 1995 reunion single Free As A Bird. Ringo also revived it for his 1999 album *I Wanna Be Santa Claus* and in 2000 R.E.M. recorded the song for their annual Holiday Single distributed to fan club members.

Most of the running time is devoted to sending up radio and TV broadcasts. In August 1967, the Marine Offences Act had sunk offshore pirate radio – with the exception of plucky Radio Caroline. For three years, DJs floating outside the UK's territorial waters had given pop fans what the BBC would not and could not: a 24-hour radio service of pop records. If you were lucky enough to pick up the pirates, you also heard brash jingles – like Radio London proclaiming itself "Your Beatle Station" – and corny commercials. The Beatles loved the pirates. Their spoof advert Get Wonder-Lust For Your Trousers, Get Wonder-Lust For Your Hair! could well be a tribute to the pirate ships, made a few weeks before the arrival of *The Who Sell Out* LP featuring cod commercials and real Radio London jingles. The Beatles also parody the staid BBC Light Programme with a request in the style of its daily show Housewives' Choice – hence George cues up "for all the people in hospital, Plenty Of Jam Jars by The Ravellers." The entertainment ends with John once

Mirrorpix, Robert Whitaker/Getty Images (3)

more deploying his best Scottish accent to wish “all the best from me to you” over an organ accompaniment of Auld Lang Syne and the sound of a chilly winter wind whistling over the glens.

“All The Way From Stokely Carmichaels-On-Sea...”

YEAR 6: The Beatles Sixth Christmas Record – 1968. Recorded at various times, in various locations

CHRISTMAS
1968

DJ KENNY EVERETT’S INTERVIEWS recorded on the group’s 1966 North American tour were broadcast by “Big L” – Radio London. The Beatles liked Everett and, in ’67 and ’68, were interviewed by him for his BBC radio shows. In June, a week into the sessions for *The White Album*, Everett visited the EMI Recording Studios to interview John. Paul and Ringo joined them after to make up some sung jingles. An obvious love of Beatles music, combined with a creative mastery of studio techniques and tape editing, made Everett the ideal person to mix together the items individually recorded for the 1968 disc.

Paul came up with a languorous song which covered all bases by wishing everyone a Happy Christmas… Easter, Autumn, Michaelmas and New Year. John read two of his poems. Jock And Yono is a wry yet revealing summary of the “overwhelming oddities” he and Yoko had faced at the beginning of their relationship, including “some of their beast friends”. Once Upon A Pool Table was full of wordplay reminiscent of Stanley Unwin. As Happiness Stan, the broadcaster and comedian had narrated the Small Faces’ concept album *Ogdens’ Nut Gone Flake*, released in May 1968.

George was recorded in New York, in the company of assistant Mal Evans, Nat Weiss, The Beatles’ legal representative in the States, and Tiny Tim. All The Beatles had fallen for the lovable eccentric – during John’s interview with Kenny Everett earlier in the year he had urged the DJ to: “Play Tiny Tim. He’s the greatest fella on Earth!” Still, many Beatles fans will have wondered why a stratospheric falsetto version of Nowhere Man was chosen as the finale of the 1968 Christmas Record.

“WE’VE HAD THE SWINGING ’60s. I WAS WONDERING, MRS LENNON, HOW YOU SAW YOUR PLACE IN THE ’70s?”
John, Xmas Flexi ’69

“I Think It’ll Be A Quiet, Peaceful ’70s”

LAST YEAR: The Beatles Seventh Christmas Record – 1969. Recorded at various times, in various locations

CREDITED UNDER HIS REAL NAME of Maurice Cole, Kenny Everett assembled the final Christmas flexi for fans. Most of the material was provided by the recently married John and Yoko, who had moved to Tittenhurst Park in Ascot, Berkshire in August 1969. They interview each other as they walk around the garden. “We’ve had the Swinging ’60s, I was wondering, Mrs Lennon,” John asks, “how you saw your place in the ’70s?” “I think it’ll be a quiet, peaceful ’70s,” Yoko replies. Later in the record, they are heard ad libbing dialogue and songs using rhythm tracks from John’s mellotron as backings. Ringo mentions the movie The Magic Christian, released in the UK in December, in which he starred with Peter Sellers: “It’s just a plug for the film, Ken. Try and keep it on!” Paul sings Christmas greetings with acoustic guitar accompaniment, but it is his briefest contribution to a festive flexi. The final Christmas record is over seven and a half minutes long. George is heard for six seconds.

EPILOGUE

AS THEIR FRIEND AND FORMER EMPLOYEE DEREK TAYLOR once pointed out, The Beatles’ commitment to recording an annual Christmas message for their fans is an example of “the regularity of their attention to good habits”. No other artist in the 1960s went to such trouble to provide a unique gift for free. Remembering the supportive devotion of the girls in early days at the Cavern Club, they always tried to keep a personal connection to their fans, even when Beatlemania had become pandemic. The scene in A Hard Day’s Night where “the boys” are given homework to reply to sacks of mail is based on reality. The remarkably thoughtful and detailed replies to fans collected in The John Lennon Letters, edited by Hunter Davies, is proof of that. Similarly, once a Fan Club Christmas Record had been established as a tradition, The Beatles did not want to let anyone down. It was certainly a personal touch that tops any modern day tweet.

Hark! The Beatles Christmas Records vinyl box set is out now on Apple/EMI Records.

Beatles FAN CLUB
HAPPY CHRISTMAS
Beatle People!

TRANSFORMER MAN

Gender-fluid, bi-sexual, an observing Jew, **EZRA FURMAN** would be a wholly new kind of rock star if he wasn't the old kind too – ambitious, questing, and killer live. MOJO meets him in "humble" Chicago as a new album aims to add electronic fizz to his rich mix of Richman, Reed and Runaround Sue. "I'm trying to make a place of safety," he tells **MARTIN ASTON**.

PORTRAITS: **COLIN LANE**

CHICAGO'S MAGNIFICENT RETRO landmark Richard's Bar, on the nondescript outskirts of downtown, is a refuge from modernity, clouded by wreaths of ban-flouting cigarette smoke. In close proximity to photos of Frank Sinatra and a giant Goodfellas poster, which hint at Mob-protected status, Ezra Furman teeters on a barstool, and explains his choice of location.

"Dive bars like this are where I became an adult, or where I first mastered playing music," he affirms. "It's my turf. Also, I'm not as broke as I was, but I used to resent people with money, and it's comforting to be somewhere a bit shitty and cheap."

Though Furman now lives in Oakland – for "reasons of the heart" – Chicago is also his turf. He grew up in Evanston, a suburb an hour north of downtown, where, as a teenager, he'd take the train into the city, to seek out bands and records. "For me, Chicago's the secret birthplace of rock'n'roll. It's Chess Records, Chuck Berry, Howlin' Wolf," he says. "And it's the birthplace of improvised comedy. It's a big city but it's got a humble quality. It's not LA or New York. People here aren't trying to get famous. They just keep working, and I identify with that."

FURMAN KNOWS ALL ABOUT hard work, as it took him eight years and six albums for his frayed, joyous brand of garage rock – think Jonathan Richman's Modern Lovers with a '50s rock'n'roll twist – to break out of Chicago. It hasn't been an easy road. To reflect outwardly how he feels on the inside has taken even longer to achieve, though today's chosen outfit – blousy shirt patterned with flowers, rouge lipstick and a string of pearls – suggests he's finally comfortable in his own skin, even in a dive like Richard's.

Colin Lane, Sarah Lee/Eyevine

Yet his startled blue-grey eyes, and constant fiddling with cigarettes and beer bottle labels, betray a character who still lives on his nerves. Which brings us to another reason we're at Richard's. "I'm not a heavy drinker, but I relate to addictive drinking, and addictive behaviour," Furman admits. As a means to escape? "Yeah. From anxiety. I'm very into rituals: I depend on them to put myself in the correct frame of mind. That's partly why I'm religious: it's a road map to a mental space. Like a sense of moral responsibility and wonder. Rituals remind me of what I care about, or how real my life is."

Furman's reality has notably shifted since his breakthrough album, 2013's *Day Of The Dog*. Its follow-up, *Perpetual Motion People* – "That's who it was made by, and for: people who feel they can never settle" – made the UK Top 25, he now sells out shows on both sides of the Atlantic, and is about to release his most adventurous album yet, *Transangelic Exodus*, tweaking his vintage brew with modernist flourishes. "Not a concept record, but almost a novel, a combination of fiction and half-true memoir, a queer outlaw saga," he says.

Music, however, nearly lost out to comedy. The second eldest of four siblings, Furman was a latecomer to music: "I wanted to be a writer, after watching shows like The Simpsons," he says. But then, aged 10, he received a Walkman, and a *Billboard Top Ten Hits Of 1961* cassette. "The music was so sweet, so spiritual," he recalls. "Del Shannon's Runaway – ➢

Keep moving: Ezra Furman, ready to face the future, Chicago, 2017; (opposite) Furman in 2014.

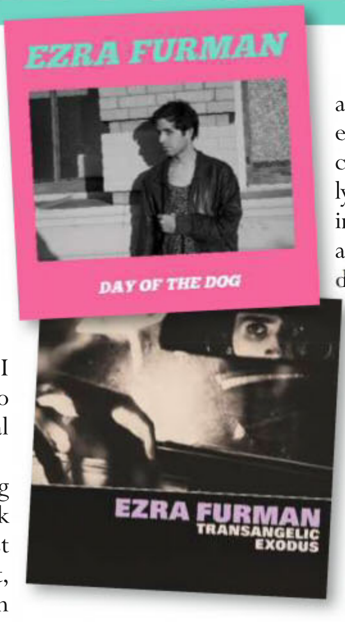
Goodfella: Ezra Furman in Richard's Bar, Chicago; (below) breakthrough albums; (right) on-stage with band at Nottingham Rescue Rooms, July 6, 2017, sax man/producer Tim Sandusky in the background; (far right) in Studio Ballistico, October 30, 2017; (bottom) blown about on the Windy City's streets.

“BACKSTAGE IS TYPICALLY WHERE YOU DRAW DICKS AND GET DRUNK, AND I'M IN THE CORNER PRAYING.”

≺ a hell of a song. Dion's Runaround Sue. At the time, I had insomnia, so I'd be awake 'til 2am, listening, looking out the window, dreaming of being… human. A lot of childlike wonder, those nights. It gave me a starting point.”

Up until then, Furman says, “I felt I couldn't speak, I couldn't explain myself. I'd beat myself up for not being a successful, popular kid. I'd lose my homework, get bad grades: ‘space cadet', they called me. But then I heard Green Day's *Dookie*. The songs were all about being fucked up, which I began wearing as a badge of honour. That led to punk, and Johnny Rotten's enunciation, his total feral quality – I was never the same again.”

He got a guitar for his bar mitzvah, but fearing a punk takeover, his mother bought Ezra a book of Dylan songs. “I learnt one for her sake: the first alphabetically, Absolutely Sweet Marie. I thought, Something's going on here. I then thought, I'm going to be a good songwriter. I heard Leonard Cohen, Randy Newman, Plastic Ono Band, different approaches. What did it mean to be a writer?”



DYLAN, DOO WOP AND PUNK COALESCED FOR Furman in The Velvet Underground, “a devastating discovery. For me, Lou Reed is a mythic figure: an ambiguous person who defied limits and trends and definitions.” But Furman didn't form his own band: “I didn't want to get distracted by a guitar pedal or a sound. I thought I was good at songwriting before I actually was, which kept me going. The earliest I released was The Faceless Boy.”

Colin Lane (3), Photoshot/Avalon

The song was included on *Beat Beat Beat*, the 2006 album debut by Ezra Furman & The Harpoons, “recorded in a series of dorm rooms” at Tufts University, Massachusetts, where he was an English major, and subsequently re-recorded as *Banging Down The Doors* once Chicago indie Minty Fresh became involved. The sound was jittery and splenetic, equal parts croon, holler and howl. “I didn't care about music the way I do now,” says Furman. “I didn't notice we weren't particularly in time or in tune. It was the energy that mattered. My only goal then was to record a song that someone put on a mix tape.”

This changed after successive albums *Inside The Human Body* (2008) and *Mysterious Power* (2011).

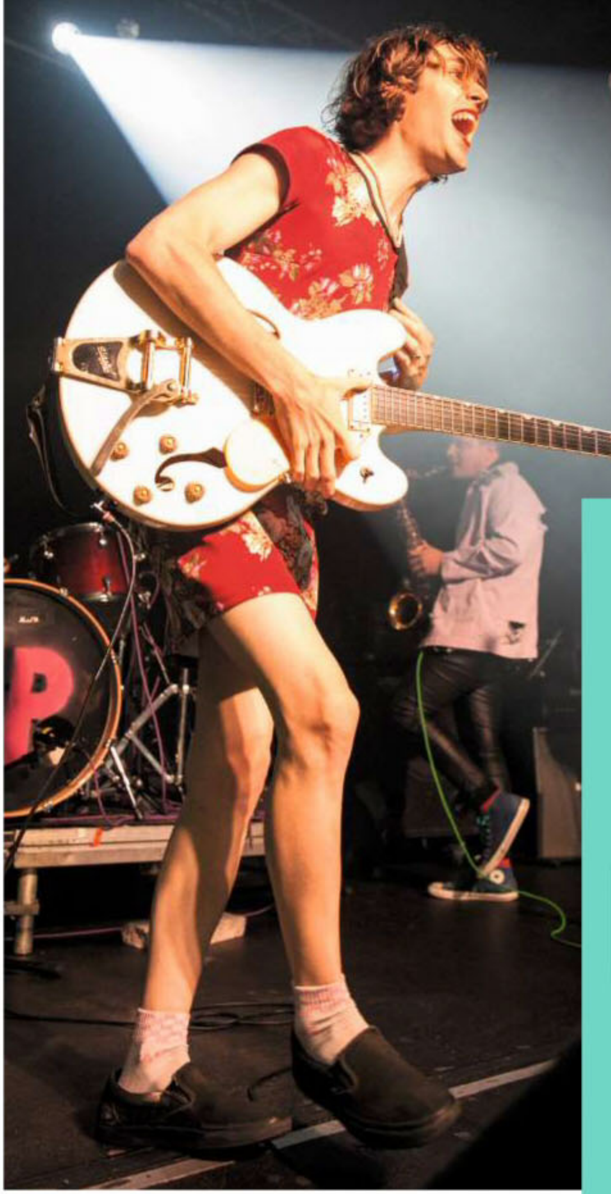
“The Harpoons had run its course,” he says. “And I became obsessed with Harry Nilsson. I wanted to make an album alone in a room, everything very intentional.”

Though he'd moved to California, Furman assembled a new band in Chicago, christened The Boy-Friends, to tour the solo *The Year Of No Returning* – which sounded nothing like Nilsson.

“It was rock'n'roll, I couldn't help it,” Furman grins. “And it turned out to be a very special band.” Producer Tim Sandusky also turned out to be a terrific saxophonist, fuelling Furman's obsession with soul music, “and real rock'n'roll, pre-1965”.

Still, his faith in music wobbled. “*Day Of The Dog* was my last shot, to crystalise my vision of rock'n'roll. Like, every dog has its day, I'll finally arrive! And if it doesn't work, I'll do something else. Most people fail at music anyway.”

The cavalry arrived when UK publications started frothing about *Day Of The Dog*. He was offered a UK tour, “but I wasn't sure, I was



thinking of going to rabbinical school," he says. "But at least I owed my band a tour. In Manchester, the opening night, people were singing the *bass line* to [*Day Of The Dog* track] Been So Strange. My bandmate said, 'Maybe this is not the right time to quit…'"

Furman compromised. Since May 2014, he strictly observes Shabbat (the Jewish Sabbath, Friday dusk to Saturday dusk), "meaning no travelling, or even using electricity or money," even when the band are touring. It's made for an interesting dynamic with his non-religious bandmates.

"Backstage is typically where you draw dicks and get drunk, and I'm in the corner and praying. And *then* I'll get drunk and draw dicks."

LEAVING RICHARD'S, Furman drives MOJO to Studio Ballistico – actually Sandusky's sprawling loft apartment, where the brawny producer has built an array of sound booths. Here, Furman's bandmates are currently busy designing and assembling large panels for their next tour, on which to project, "some cryptic symbolism, so we bring our own world wherever we go rather than be defined by the venue," he explains.

In other ways, Furman intends to be *less* cryptic from now on – identifying explicitly as gender-fluid and bisexual. He increasingly wears skirts on-stage, and today's mop of hair is nothing like 2014's boyish cut.

"I felt like I had to maintain the signifiers of masculinity, which never felt natural," he says. "Trying to be as likeable as possible means your real self is unloved. A whole closetedness defined the first two and a half decades of my life."

There were signs on earlier records, but nothing as clear-cut as *Transangelic Exodus*, beginning with the words 'trans' and, 'exodus', referencing the Biblical flight of the Jews from Egypt. In the album's loose narrative, "I'm in love with an angel, and a government is after us, because angels are illegal. I feel it's dangerous to talk about specifics, in the way that Bowie would occasionally try to explain Ziggy Stardust, which didn't make the record any better. What's essential is the paranoid, authoritarian mood, and how certain people are being stigmatised. It's a current theme in so-called democracies."

To mirror its dramatic shifts, the album marks a new Furman sound, still frayed and wired but with sparser, electronic-flecked tones. For this, The Boy-Friends have become The Visions. "We used to be an old-fashioned rave-up, but it's now more about being in the same conversation as 21st century music," their frontman explains. "What is the cutting edge for a band?"

Furman appears to have found his own edge, as not just a garage rock renovator but as a modern kind of figurehead. When Channel 4 News interviewed him in 2015, he was called "the pied piper for restless outcasts everywhere." Does the mantle sit easy?

"If you've been rejected from other places, I'm trying to make a place of safety, a sanctuary," he concludes. "One of my motivations is to be a part of a society that revives the human spirit rather than crushes it. I want to shine through this medium of pop music, as my heroes managed, with dignity and artfulness and something connected to the spirit of God. To show how the human spirit can shine through the radio, or a magazine. That's my real desire for fame." Ⓜ

I'M SO FREE

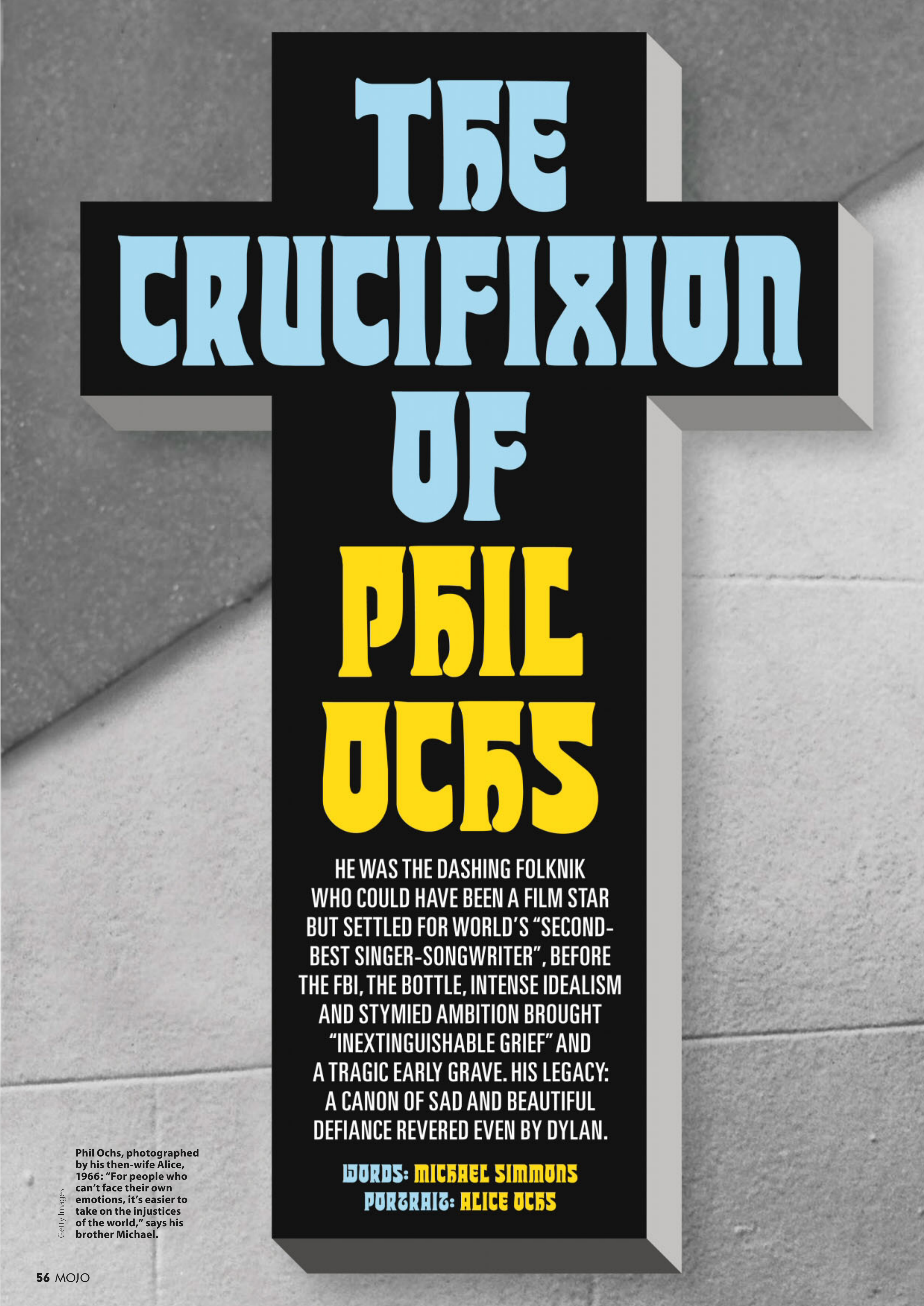
EZRA FURMAN on his weird feelings for Lou Reed' *Transformer*, and why he's writing a book about it.

LOU REED TRANSFORMER

"33 1/3 were looking for commissions at a time when I was reading a terrible Lou Reed biography. It also dovetailed with being asked to write something for The Guardian, for which I chose queer rock'n'rollers, like Reed. I realised I had something to say about him, about identity and performance, and for me *Transformer* is where his problems coalesced: where his artist and his sell-out selves met, in all its contradictory glory.

I intuitively connected with *Transformer* because, for me, it's an effort at self-erasure. He's trying to erase his intelligence, to become a pop star, because that's what will connect with people. He's learned that being his genius artful self doesn't work, he's not selling records. So, it's a deeply flawed record, but it's interestingly disappointing. Its ambiguity elevates it beyond simply being a good record to make it an utterly unforgettable one. And as I wrote the book, I realised that I was about to turn 30, make a commercial breakthrough with my music, and leave an old band behind, and come out as queer, and being Jewish – I had everything in common with this guy. I was really into songwriting and trying to make it art, but also compelled by the dumbest songs."

Transformer, written by Ezra Furman for 33 1/3's series of album books, is published in autumn 2018.



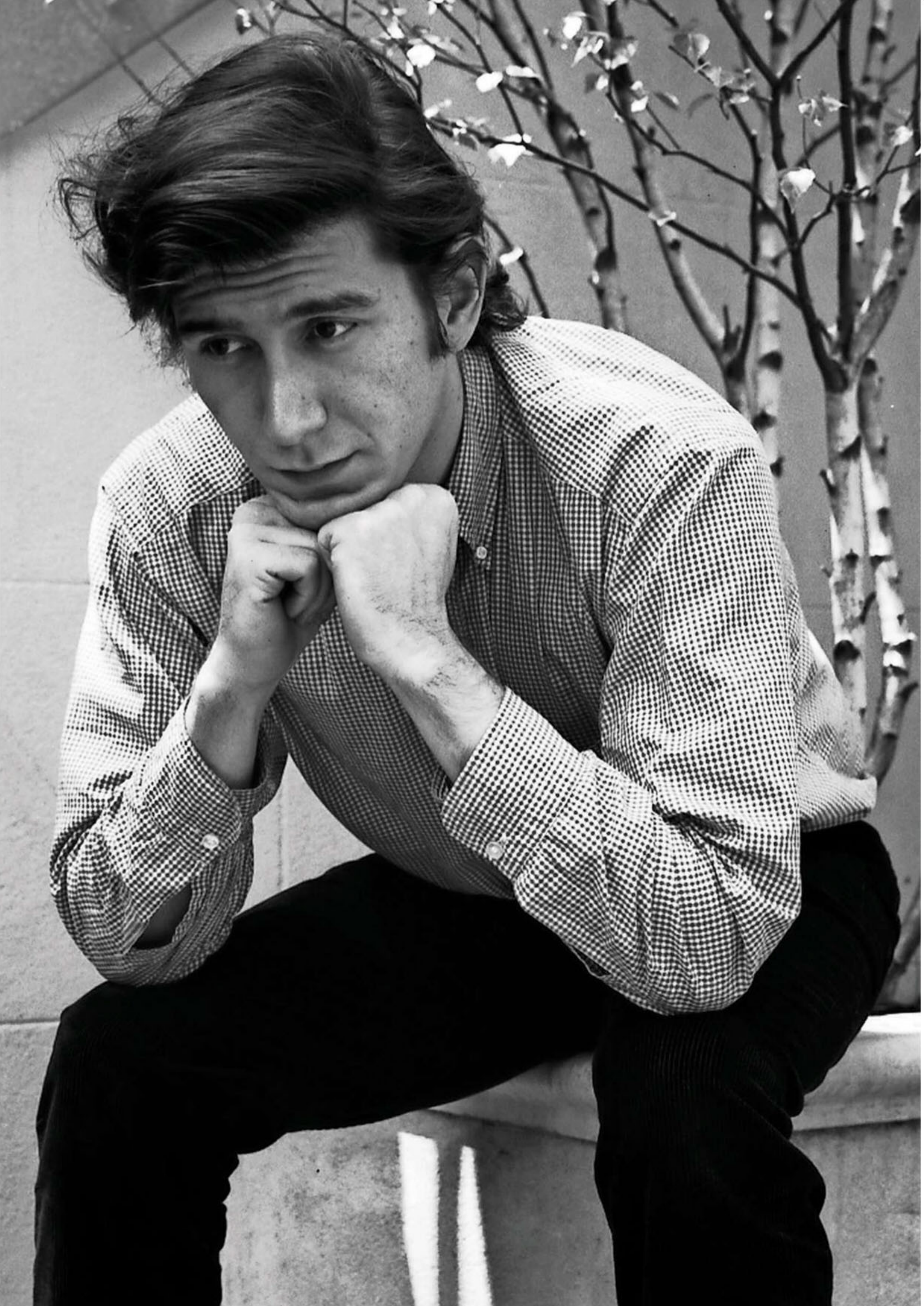
THE CRUCIFIXION OF PHIL OCHS

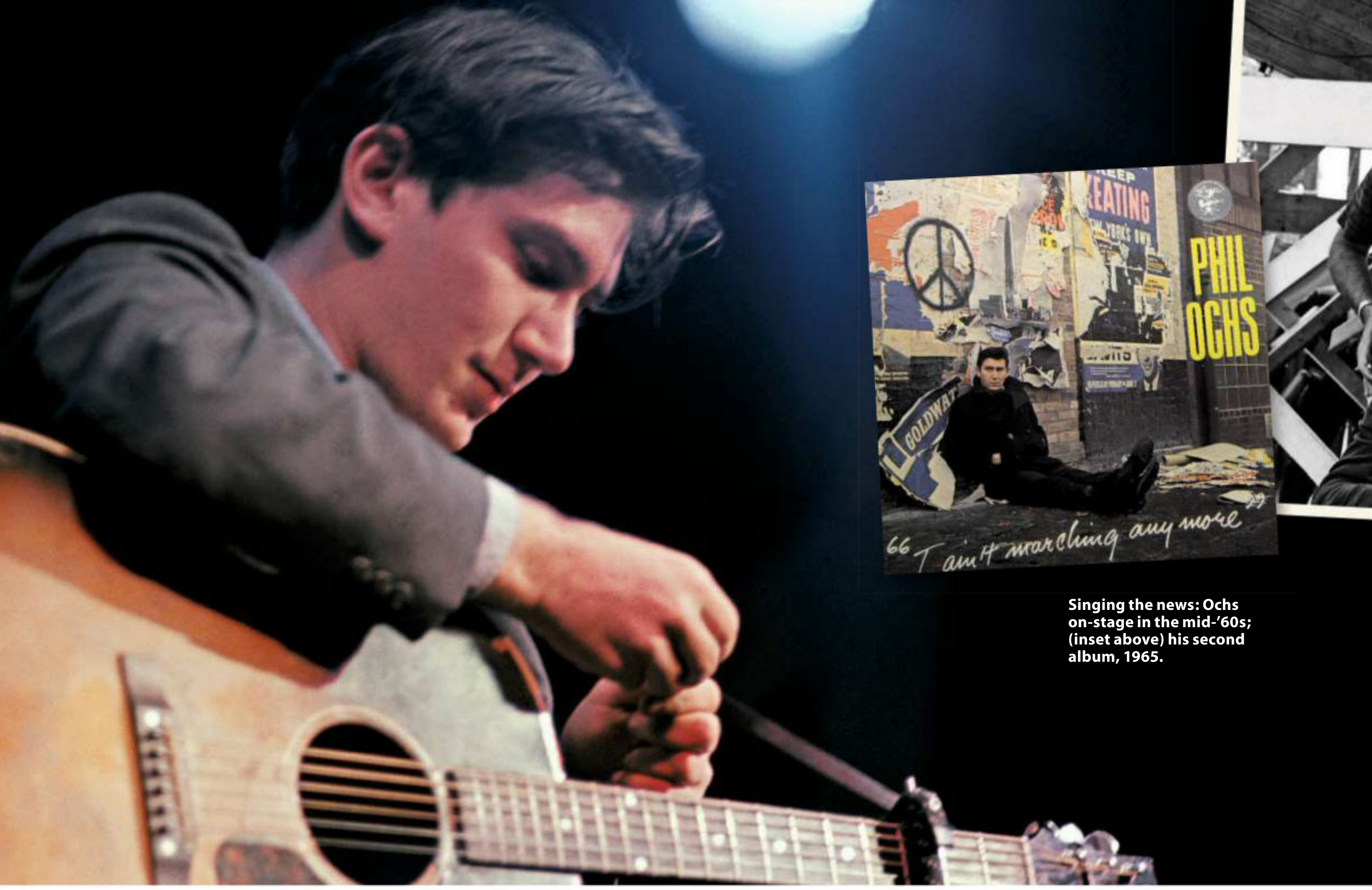
HE WAS THE DASHING FOLKNIK WHO COULD HAVE BEEN A FILM STAR BUT SETTLED FOR WORLD'S "SECOND-BEST SINGER-SONGWRITER", BEFORE THE FBI, THE BOTTLE, INTENSE IDEALISM AND STYMIED AMBITION BROUGHT "INEXTINGUISHABLE GRIEF" AND A TRAGIC EARLY GRAVE. HIS LEGACY: A CANON OF SAD AND BEAUTIFUL DEFIANCE REVERED EVEN BY DYLAN.

WORDS: MICHAEL SIMMONS
PORTRAIT: ALICE OCHS

Phil Ochs, photographed by his then-wife Alice, 1966: "For people who can't face their own emotions, it's easier to take on the injustices of the world," says his brother Michael.

Getty Images





Singing the news: Ochs on-stage in the mid-'60s; (inset above) his second album, 1965.

BY DECEMBER 1975, WRITER LARRY 'RATSO' Sloman and Phil Ochs had been friends for a couple of years. Ratso took over Ochs's lease on his Prince Street apartment, not far from the epicentre of New York's '60s folk explosion at the crossroads of Bleecker and MacDougal. Ochs had sunk into manic depression and alcoholism, alternating between meek apathy and frantic madness – the latter in the guise of a self-created character named John Train. Homeless, Train/Ochs roamed the Village filled with grandiose visions of benefit concerts with Sinatra, drinking his old haunts dry and threatening friends with hammers and knives. Ratso – who'd just returned from months covering Bob Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue – had given Ochs an open invitation to crash.

"Every day he'd get up and pace the living room floor," recalls Ratso. "He'd repeat out loud, 'I can see it now, my obituary in the New York Times: Folk singer found dead.'" One day Ratso came home and found a broken railing. The once-trim Phil had tried to hang himself, but the structure couldn't hold his body weight and he broke it – and lived.

Sloman had witnessed Ochs writing song scraps in his notebook. "He was reluctant to show them to anybody. I wanted to demonstrate that people loved him and were anxious to hear these things – and that he could sing. I said to him, Let's record this shit." Inviting a couple of local women to provide encouragement, Sloman convinced Ochs to sing the unfinished songs while running tape. One was called The Ballad Of John Train: "Phil Ochs checked in to the Chelsea Hotel/There was blood on his clothes, they were dirty/I could see by his face he was not feeling well/He'd been to one too many parties."

"Phil would repeat out loud, 'I can see my obituary in the New York Times: Folk singer found dead.'"
LARRY "RATSO" SLOMAN

The songs had Ochs's signature catchy melodies and his voice – always a gorgeous instrument – sounded fine. What really struck Sloman were the lyrics – a collective portrait of a man enduring a full-blown nervous breakdown. "He was able to step outside himself and write about Phil Ochs in the third person," says Sloman. "It was fascinating."

In January, Ochs moved to his sister Sonny's house in Far Rockaway. On April 8, Sloman got a message that Phil had called and asked him to call back. Sensing no urgency, he returned the call the next morning, April 9, 1976, and Sonny answered the phone.

The folk singer had been found dead.

PHILIP OCHS WAS AN ALL-AMERICAN BOY, BORN ON December 19, 1940 in El Paso, Texas, his family settling in Columbus, Ohio when Philip was a teenager. His father Jacob was a New York Jew and mother Gertrude a Scottish Jew whom Jacob had met while in medical school in Edinburgh. Despite their heritage, the Ochs family – including older sister Sonny and younger brother Michael – was a typical mid-century clan in the heartland. Their normality hid Jacob's manic depression, aggravated as an army doctor during the Second World War.

Both brothers began lifetime love affairs with popular musics: for Michael it was rock'n'roll and R&B, for Philip it was country singers, particularly the high lonesome Hank Williams, the piercing tenor of Webb Pierce and clean crooning Faron Young (all influences on Ochs's later vocal style), but he was also enamoured with Elvis Presley and Buddy Holly.

Philip showed talent for playing music, as well as writing fiction. He mastered the clarinet within six months of picking it up. After seeing a picture of a marching band at a military academy, the future peacenik enrolled. While there, he published short stories and won first prize for a tale that recounted an incident of senseless violence. Prior to entering Ohio State University in 1958, he had a nose job

Bound for glory: (left) folk singers Tom Paxton (standing, left), Eric Andersen (seated) and Ochs, Newport Folk Festival, 1964; (above) Phil with daughter Meegan, New York, 1967.

and announced he preferred to be called "Phil" – and that he was "going to be a star".

At college, he became pals with a student named Jim Glover, who introduced Ochs to Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and The Weavers, while Glover's communist father gave Ochs a crash course in Marx, unions and the Cuban Revolution. Ochs became a socialist, but he was also an American patriot and, like many his age, revered the young President John F. Kennedy and his vision of a New Frontier. Majoring in journalism, he founded his own newspaper and wrote prolifically for campus journals, but was denied an editorship because of his support for Fidel Castro. It hardly mattered. He found a new way to express his beliefs: music.

OCHS HAD WON GLOVER'S ACOUSTIC GUITAR IN A BET. Practising non-stop, within a month he could play it and began writing songs based on current events. The first was called Bay Of Pigs, a recounting of the failed CIA-backed invasion of Cuba by anti-Castro forces. Ochs and Glover formed a duo called The Sundowners (briefly, The Singing Socialists). While their voices blended, Glover couldn't keep up with Ochs. "They broke up because Phil wanted to practise 26 hours a day," says Michael Ochs. Glover lit out for New York where the folk craze was in full bloom, while Ochs was hired at Faragher's in Cleveland, opening up for established folkies like The Smothers Brothers, Judy Henske and Bob Gibson, before following Glover to New York.

Tom Paxton was already a respected folkie in Greenwich Village when Phil landed in autumn 1962. He first saw Ochs at the Third Side coffeehouse, one of many in the area, within days of Phil's arrival. Paxton was struck by "…his intensity, his commitment. He cared about what he was doing at any moment. And he wanted radical politics to be big entertainment starring Phil." The combination of idealism and ambition prompted a windfall of original material. "Phil had more songs in Broadside than anyone else," says Paxton, referring to the mimeographed 'zine that collected topical tunes.

An informal folk fraternity formed including Ochs, Paxton, Eric Andersen and 21-year-old Bob Dylan, with Dave Van Ronk a slightly older mentor. They were comradely but competitive, with a cutting sense of humour supplied by Dylan and pal Bobby Neuwirth. There were drinks – lots – at the Kettle Of Fish and a room over the Gaslight Cafe with a penny-ante poker game. When Phil arrived, Dylan had only released one album, mostly covers, yet he was writing and performing modern classics, notably Blowin' In The Wind, premiered in April '62. Michael Ochs: "Phil said, 'I came to NY to be the best singer-songwriter in the country, and when I met Dylan I decided I'd be the second best.'"

Events began speeding up. In 1963, Jacob Ochs died from a cerebral haemorrhage and Phil married girlfriend Alice Skinner, who gave birth to their daughter Meegan. In early '64, producer/A&R man Paul Rothchild brought Ochs to Elektra Records and his debut album *All The News That's Fit To Sing* was released in April, followed the next year by *I Ain't Marching Anymore*. The latter featured two of Ochs' strongest political statements: the satirical Draft Dodger Rag and Here's To The State Of Mississippi – a furious response to the murder of three civil rights workers, written after he'd spent a week in the state. The chorus reflected Ochs's seething anger: "Mississippi find yourself/Another country to be part of."

The finest of his three Elektra albums was his last: 1966's *In Concert*. Ostensibly from shows in New York (at Carnegie Hall) and Boston, Phil's nerves rendered his voice hoarse and it had to be largely re-recorded. Nevertheless, an album describing US imperialism as rape (Cops Of The World), and skewering pseudo-leftist hypocrisy (Love Me, I'm A Liberal) became his best-selling yet – a fact not lost on Ochs. "In my 18 years as a record executive, never has an artist checked sales figures more carefully or more frequently than Phil," wrote Jac Holzman, founder and head of Elektra.

Originally a client of Dylan manager Albert Grossman, Ochs jumped ship in 1965 to start a management company with political activist Arthur Gorson, whom he'd met when performing for striking miners in Hazard, Kentucky. Barricade Music was successful and Gorson expanded it, making a deal to handle the publishing of a promising songwriter named Joni Mitchell. But Ochs was jealous and Gorson dropped her. Eventually, Phil and Arthur agreed to dissolve their partnership. Phil hadn't spoken to his brother Michael – now a photographer shooting album covers in Los Angeles – for a few years when a record label honcho asked Michael to get word to Phil that he was interested in signing him. Phil surprised his brother by asking him to be his manager.

MICHAEL'S FIRST ASSIGNMENT IN HIS NEW ROLE WAS to find 1) an apartment, and 2) a girlfriend for his now-single brother. "Is that what a manager does?" wondered Michael, securing both. Next on the agenda was a new record deal. Phil had been offered the lead in youthsploitation movie Wild In The Streets, but turned it down because he found the script reactionary. Cinephile Phil thought that signing with Warner Brothers could lead to contact with their film division. But the brothers met with Jerry Moss – the "M" of A&M – who offered them a long-term record contract and creative control. Phil signed with A&M.

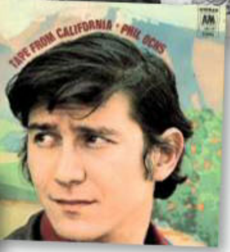
Working with eclectic producer Larry Marks, Ochs crafted a unique sound that went beyond folk, incorporating cabaret, classical and *musique concrète*. The resulting album, '67's *Pleasures Of The Harbor*, is held by many to be Ochs's *Sgt. Pepper*. Gone was the troubadour-and-his-guitar archetype, replaced by sophisticated orchestral arrangements. The only vestige of the singing journalist was Outside Of A Small Circle Friends. Backed by a cracked ragtime piano, Ochs sings with tongue in cheek of apathy in the face of crimes and injustices – but mention of marijuana ensured a radio ban.

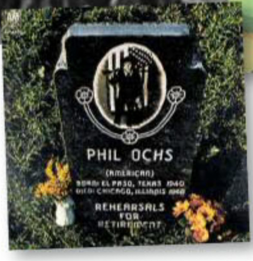
The set's classic was The Crucifixion – a song that had come to its composer in one sitting. On one level about the JFK assassination, it's a meditation on society's worship of sacrificial lambs, draped with dissonant brass, strings and electronics by avant- ➢

PHIL OCHS: PLEASURES OF THE HARBOR

Is that what a manager does? Phil in Mill Valley, California, 1968, with his brother Michael Ochs, whom he had asked to take over his affairs; (inset right) the 1967 long-player reckoned by many to be Ochs's *Sgt. Pepper*.

Getty Images (4)


TAPE FROM CALIFORNIA • PHIL OCHS


PHIL OCHS
(AMERICAN)
BORN: EL PASO, TEXAS 1940
DIED: CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 1968
REHEARSALS FOR RETIREMENT

Phil, photographed by his brother Michael, sings at a 1967 Vietnam War protest outside the United Nations, NYC; (near left) Ochs and activist Jerry Rubin, 1969; (insets)1968 post-Elektra albums *Tape From California* and '69's *Rehearsals For Retirement* with its 'Died: Chicago, Illinois 1968' headstone.

≺ garde musician Joseph Byrd. Ochs sang it for Robert Kennedy on March 2, 1967 on a flight from Washington DC to New York after Kennedy proposed a plan to end the Vietnam war on the floor of the Senate. When Bobby – soon to be martyred himself – realised it was about his brother, his eyes welled with tears.

Yet in the words of Michael Ochs, *Pleasures*… "sold bupkis". Phil had painted his masterpiece and barely anyone noticed.

Meanwhile, with 500,000 US troops in Vietnam by '67, Ochs came up with the idea – two years before John Lennon and Yoko Ono's similarly-worded campaign – to proclaim "THE WAR IS OVER!" Meant as an absurdist psych-out of the war machine, War Is Over celebrations were convened in Los Angeles and New York, Ochs using his status as a leading folk singer to alert the media. "What a giant riot it was!" recalls singer Judy Henske of the LA demo on June 23, 1967. Despite the peaceful crowd, the LAPD bashed heads as peaceniks fled. "Phil and I jumped on this TV camera and if we hadn't, we would've been trampled," says Henske.

Allied with his friends Abbie Hoffman, Paul Krassner and Jerry Rubin – the self-styled Yippies – Ochs joined the bill at The Festival Of Life in Chicago in August '68, a dissenting counterbalance to the Democratic National Convention. "It's gonna be a fucking disaster," Michael told him. Phil was undeterred. Despite the wish-list of rockers and folkies invited, only Ochs and the MC5 showed. Events in Chicago alternated between comedy and tragedy. The Yippies nominated for President a pig (dubbed "Pigasus") that Ochs and Rubin had bought off a farmer. The pair were busted for violating a livestock ordinance. ("The pig squealed," joked a cop.) At one gathering, Phil sang I Ain't Marching Anymore and audience members began burning draft cards. "That was the most exciting moment of my career," he told Paul Krassner. But the week ended with the infamous police riot that was covered on live TV, with cops brutally clubbing demonstrators.

Phil took it personally. Michael Ochs: "The idea of change became ridiculous. The fact that we *could* protest, we *could* effectuate change was something he always believed in and was something he tried to do. To see it destroyed so viciously – to Phil it was the death of democracy."

As with 1968's *Tape From California*, 1969's *Rehearsals For Retirement* toned down *Pleasure*'s experimentation, but Larry Marks' ornate arrangements mirrored Ochs's aesthetic: "In such ugly times, the only true protest is beauty."

The artist's defeated state of mind was illustrated by the cover, a gravestone that read: "PHIL OCHS (AMERICAN) – DIED: CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 1968.

THE GOVERNMENT WENT AFTER THE ORGANISERS OF the Chicago Convention demos and began surveillance. "One day after Chicago there's a knock on my door and it's two FBI guys," says Michael Ochs. One threatened to beat him up, while the other "…wanted me to get word to Phil that they needed to speak. Phil was terrified he was gonna be indicted and then when he wasn't, he was furious – like, 'Why didn't they indict me?'" *(laughs)*

Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin were indicted and Phil's testimony at the subsequent Chicago 7 Trial read like a Samuel Beckett play. The judge and prosecution continuously objected to Ochs's answers. For instance, when Ochs identified his guitar case as his guitar, the judge questioned him: "Are you sure your guitar is in there?" But he was relishing the attention. Perhaps Ochs's best ever career move was his performance of I Ain't Marching Anymore outside the courtroom, with the nation watching on the evening news.

It sparked a thought. If only he could reach middle-Americans, really connect with them, imagine the change that could be wrought. What if you could blend the disparate charismas of Che Guevara and… Elvis Presley?

On March 27, 1970, Ochs walked on stage at Carnegie Hall in New York wearing a gold lamé suit and backed by a rock'n'roll band. Performing a mix of Elvis and Buddy Holly and originals, he denied he was a "radical troublemaker" and proclaimed, "I'm a regular American guy like anybody else."

Praising Merle Haggard, he introduced a song "that shows the other side of America" and launched into Haggard's anti-hippy anthem Okie From Muskogee. Ochs had grown up loving country and rockabilly and he was extending an olive branch. The audience was divided between cheers and hecklers, but he failed to bridge any cultural divide. It would be a few years before Willie Nelson would accomplish something approaching that.

FREE RADICALS

5 CRUCIAL PHIL OCHS CUTS, BY SUPERFAN BILLY BRAGG.

Power And The Glory

PHIL OCHS
All the News that's Fit to Sing

(from All The News That's Fit To Sing, 1964)
"Phil Ochs loved America and, like any true patriot, he was outraged when his country failed to live up to the ideals on which it was founded. This is his attempt to write his own version of Woody Guthrie's This Land Is Your Land and it should be sung in schools across America today."

There But For Fortune

PHIL OCHS IN CONCERT

(from Phil Ochs In Concert, 1966)
"While you could argue that Ochs was the greatest topical songwriter of the '60s folk boom, this reminds us that he was a match for any of his peers when it came to penning a timeless classic."

Love Me, I'm A Liberal

(from Phil Ochs In Concert, 1966)
"As with all such finely honed topical songs, the cultural references have dated somewhat. However, Ochs's description of a liberal as someone whose politics are '10 degrees to the left of centre in good times, 10 degrees to the right of centre if it affects them personally' still resonates today."

When I'm Gone

(from Phil Ochs In Concert, 1966)
"A reflection on mortality that acts as a spur to seizing the moment, this touching ballad was made even more poignant by Phil's early demise."

No More Songs

(from Greatest Hits, 1970)

PHIL OCHS GREATEST HITS

"'Hello, hello, hello, is there anybody home? I've only called to say I'm sorry…' So begins the last track on Ochs's final album, his resignation audible in the poetic imagery of every line. Phil believed that music could change the world and when it didn't, he took it personally."

“It is wrong to expect a reward for your struggles. The reward is the act of struggle itself.” PHIL OCHS

“When we got Dylan it sold out”: Phil (above left), Bob Dylan and Dave Van Ronk (far right) at the Friends Of Chile benefit, Felt Forum, New York, May 9, 1974; (left) a lubricated Ochs celebrates with Bob.

1970’s *Greatest Hits* – a sly title for all-new material by a hitless singer – was Ochs’s final studio album. Produced by close friend Van Dyke Parks and combining art songs and country, it looked back to his youth with Boy In Ohio and Jim Dean Of Indiana. And unlike most country rock, Ochs’s authentic country material could’ve succeeded commercially if he’d pursued it. However, the album’s final track was an eerie omen. “No More Songs was such a prescient, confessional admission,” says Parks, “so foretelling of his inextinguishable grief.”

Increasingly uninspired, Phil spent the next few years travelling in Europe, South America, Australia and Africa. The African trip yielded a single recorded in Kenya with local musicians that predated Paul Simon’s *Graceland*, but Ochs was mugged and strangled in Tanzania and lost his upper register. It was his trip to Chile in 1971 that buoyed him. Salvador Allende had been elected president – a rallying point for leftists around the world. While in Chile, Ochs became friends with Victor Jara, a folk-singing national hero who’d aided Allende’s election and brought Ochs to sing for miners high in the Andes.

Allende was nationalising resources and US President Richard Nixon was not going to let this pass. In cahoots with the CIA, the Chilean military overthrew Allende in 1973. Subversives were rounded up – including Victor Jara. While in custody, soldiers first crushed his hands and then killed him. Ochs was horrified, but it motivated him to act. Working with a young woman named Deni Frand, Ochs organised a benefit for Chilean refugees called An Evening With Salvador Allende. Pete Seeger, Arlo Guthrie, Dave Van Ronk and others signed up, but tickets weren’t moving fast enough. “He began to obsess about getting Dylan,” recalls Frand. “We had a strong line-up, but it wasn’t enough to sell out.” Dylan met Ochs at the Prince Street pad where Phil read Allende’s inaugural address to him. Witnesses say Phil was impassioned and Dylan visibly moved. He agreed to participate. “When we were able to announce we had Dylan, it sold out,” says Frand.

Getty Images (3), Rex, Avalon, Alamy

THE CONCERT ON MAY 9, 1974 WAS A SUCCESS DESPITE the overflowing wine. “By the time the show started, everyone was dead drunk,” says Arthur Gorson. “They couldn’t remember the words to Blowin’ In The Wind.”

Deni Frand: “Phil spoke to Dylan about replicating the concert for other causes and taking it on the road. Dylan agreed, but then Rolling Thunder happened and that devastated Phil. He wasn’t invited because he was a mess.”

In the world, there were causes for celebration: Nixon resigned in August ’74 and the war in Vietnam ended in 1975. Phil, Joan Baez, Harry Belafonte and others celebrated with a final War Is Over rally in Central Park. Some noticed that Phil didn’t seem as jubilant as one might expect. “For people who can’t face their own emotions, it’s easier to take on the injustices of the world,” muses brother Michael.

In the midst of a manic binge fuelled by alcohol, Phil began introducing himself as John Train. He claimed he’d killed Phil Ochs and had all kinds of plans. Train/Ochs was becoming a menace, threatening friends and strangers with violence. In October ’75, he made an appearance at Folk City with Dylan in the audience and performed a moving set of folk songs. Somewhere inside John Train, Phil Ochs’ heart still beat. “Oh man,” said Dylan, knocked out. “I haven’t heard these songs for such a long time.” As Train receded and Phil re-emerged, he was inconsolably ashamed by the damage he’d caused. Arthur Gorson: “That realisation of hurting, and embarrassing himself in front of, the people he loved contributed to his final demise.”

When he hanged himself at his sister’s house, Phil Ochs was spent, but he left behind a body of work of incomparable power and beauty. He took it as a personal mission to hurl himself against the machine and, while there were victories, the machine was too huge for one man to move. And yet he knew that.

“It is wrong to expect a reward for your struggles,” Ochs once wrote, quoting Greek scribe Nikos Kazantzakis. He continued in his own voice: “The reward is the act of struggle itself, not what you win. Even though you can’t expect to defeat the absurdity of the world, you must make that attempt. That’s morality. That’s art. That’s life.”

Phil Ochs, Central Park, NYC, June 5, 1975, less than a year before his death.

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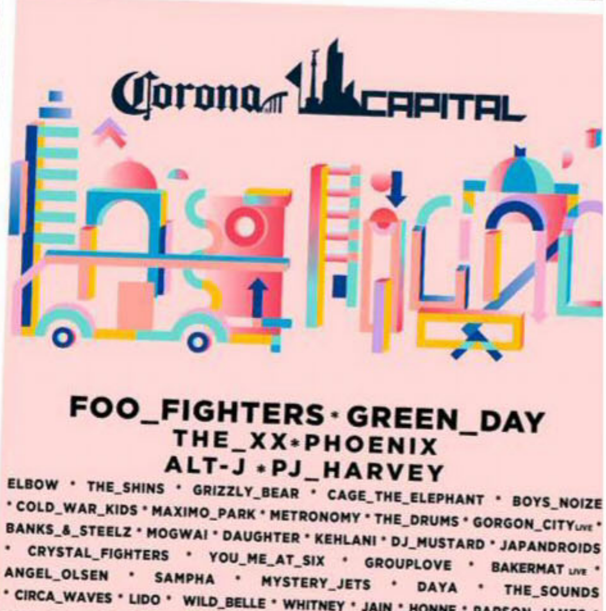
MOJO **ON THE ROAD**

PEOPLE MIGHT THINK, 'WHAT IS THIS, A CULT?'"

Elbow are in Mexico, bringing their quasi-religious humanism to tearful Catholics, MOJO and Dave Grohl, fuelled by "wonderment" and mandatory alcohol. Does this, and the fact they're battling Ed Sheeran and X-Factor to be Christmas Number 1, mean they're rich and famous? "We're doing all right," they assure **Pat Gilbert**.

Portrait by **Mattia Zoppellaro**.



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"I DON'T CONSIDER MYSELF A SNAKE-SKINNED ALIEN FROM ANOTHER WORLD. I'M KEEN TO DEMYSTIFY WHAT WE DO." **GUY GARVEY**

THE MERCADO MEDELLÍN, A LARGE INDOOR market in the Roma district of Mexico City, rarely receives European visitors, so the gang of lightly bearded figures from Greater Manchester, led by a lugubrious-looking 6 ft 4 inch giant in a grey trilby hat, inevitably draws curious stares from locals shopping for black beans, fresh shark meat, red chilli peppers and other piquant delicacies. Elbow are in Mexico for the very first time, and, though tonight they'll be performing second on the bill to Foo Fighters at the vast Corona Capital music festival, no one is quite sure how they'll be received.

"I've absolutely no idea how big we are here," rasps Guy Garvey, the band's aforementioned man-mountain vocalist, mindful that most physical music sales in Mexico are bootlegs, and high volumes of streaming can be accounted for by free deals with mobile phones.

"I've had lots of emails from Mexican fans asking us to come here, but no one has recognised us yet…"

Then, after posing for pictures in a busy street-food joint, something magical happens. From nowhere, a woman approaches, explaining in broken English that her teenage daughter, bashfully hiding behind her in a grey union flag hoodie, is a huge Elbow fan.

Garvey bends down and puts his arm around the tiny creature. "Come and have your photo taken with us!" he booms. Twigging that tickets for the festival, at US $150 a pop, might be beyond her family's means, he quickly adds, "Do you want to come and see us play tonight? I'll get you in free. And why not bring your friends?"

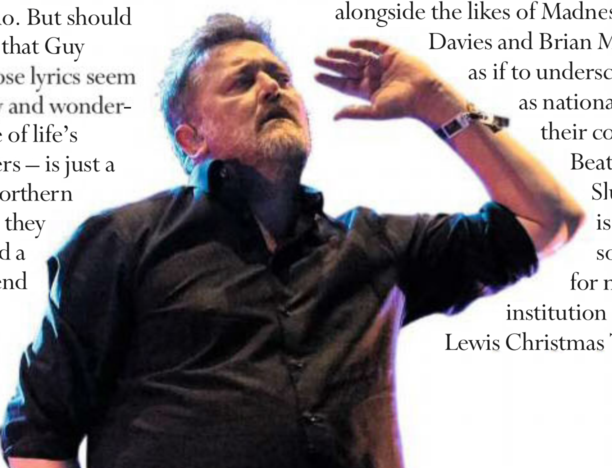
The girl is overwhelmed, and fights back tears. And as if touched by the same potent emotional charge, so, behind their sunglasses, does virtually everybody else present. It is, as Garvey will describe later, "something of a moment".

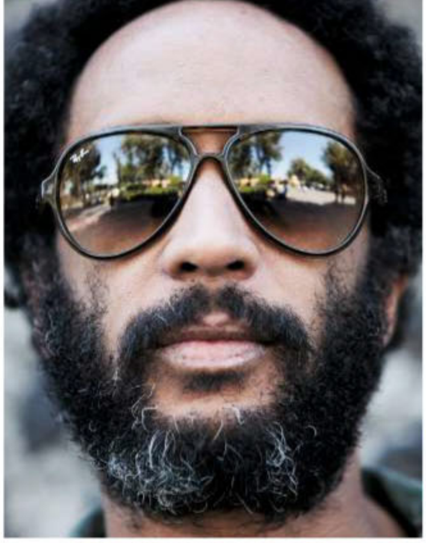
A careful scrutiny of Elbow's seven-album career will reveal that spreading joy and love, like millennial musical shamen, is what Elbow do. But should anyone think that Guy Garvey – whose lyrics seem to find beauty and wonderment in some of life's darkest corners – is just a big, cuddly, Northern milksop, then they ought to spend a riotous weekend on the road with him.

"I love a lively argument… and I'm always pissed on-stage," he tells MOJO. And he's not proved wrong on either count.

A DECADE SINCE THEIR fourth album, *The Seldom Seen Kid*, scooped the 2008 Mercury Prize and launched them into the wider public consciousness, Elbow have become such a pervasive force in British culture that one struggles to remember what life was like without them. One Day Like This, *The Seldom Seen Kid*'s hymnal big-hitter, today ranks high in the list of songs people are married or buried to. Luminaries as diverse as Alan Bennett, John Cale and Timothy Spall are fans.

In 2012, Elbow's common touch – plus a back catalogue of meticulously crafted LPs, delicately balancing folk, pop, found sounds, stirring strings and transcendental lyrical strangeness – earned them a place at the closing ceremony to the London Olympics, alongside the likes of Madness, Ray Davies and Brian May. And now, as if to underscore their status as national treasures, their cover of The Beatles' Golden Slumbers is this year's soundtrack for no less an institution than the John Lewis Christmas TV ad.





"Something of a moment": Elbow with a Mexican fan and her mum; (top left) Pete Turner; (centre, from left) Guy Garvey; Craig Potter; Guy meets Dave Grohl; (below) Mark Potter; (opposite page) Garvey winning over the Autódrome Hermanos Rodríguez.

Mattia Zoppellaro (8)

Elbow's vertiginous ascent, after years of struggle, has, in keeping with their unfussy outward appearance, been comparatively drama-free. Yet 12 months ago, news emerged that February 2017's *Little Fictions* was to be their first album made without drummer and founder member Richard Jupp. His departure was the first upheaval in Elbow's line-up since they formed in Bury in 1990 – and has, it seems, left an indelible mark on a group who consider their friendships inviolate.

"He wanted to do different music, which he's doing, and it was sad," says Garvey, as we leave the food market. "It was a point of great pride that we were together as long as we were, and that no one had ever left the band. I'm sure he'll have a different story, so I don't really want to go into the specifics, but by the time he thought he should leave, we thought he should, too. I'd be lying if I said we were talking. None of us are talking to him now."

Band and entourage have by now relocated to the sun-blasted terrace of a restaurant on a vibrant, tree-lined thoroughfare near the Frida Kahlo Museum, a Mexico City must-see. Garvey and the rest of the group – super-amiable bassist Pete Turner, and brothers Mark (guitars) and Craig Potter (keyboards, production) – are, as is the Elbow custom, tucking in to a round of lunchtime beers, together with colourful plates of tacos and tortillas.

During our short minibus journey from the Mercado, several intra-band tales were traded, which one would have thought by now had long passed their sell-by date. But when Mark – 'Pots' to the others – relates the story of how back in the '90s Guy broke the axle of the guitarist's beloved VW Beetle, taking it for a crafty spin while Mark was scoring some weed, the four men emit hearty guffaws. "I eventually confessed to my dad what really happened," Pots smiles. "We were really famous by then, so he didn't really mind."

THAT ELBOW HAD EXISTED FOR over 15 years before they became a hit chart act is etched into their defiant swagger and unshakeable *esprit de corps* – and reflected in their empathy for the underdog. Here in Mexico City, poverty is visible even in the tourist districts, and, as we eat and chat, a relentless stream of hawkers, mariachi players and raggedy beggars have to be gently palmed away. It is, says Garvey, "heartbreaking".

Yet Elbow's left leanings – powerfully expressed in songs like The Loneliness Of A Tower Crane Driver and the overtly political 2005 LP *Leaders Of The Free World* – have been made abundantly clear to audiences. It's while discussing the growing rise of inequality, globe-wide, that Garvey sketches out the band's ideological heritage.

"It was the way we were brought up," he says. "Mark and Craig's parents are teachers, and so are Pete's. My dad was a proof reader for the Sports Chronicle at Allied Newspapers. Dad was a Maxwell pensioner [workers whose pensions were stolen by owner Robert Maxwell]. Most of his colleagues lost their jobs because of what happened on the newspapers in the '80s and '90s. Mum was a policewoman before she married, and dad's brother was a policeman. Trades unionists were fighting with policemen, so it literally divided families. Those communities were fucked.

"But I also grew up in the haze of Happy Mondays and the Manchester thing," he adds, "which also shaped me."

MOJO suggests that the current political climate has served to normalise selfishness. The force of Garvey's reply is unexpected.

"Alan fucking Sugar – top cunt!" he explodes. "Whatever that programme's called, The Apprentice? Oh my God, hideous bastards. The worst was that Nick [Hewer, erstwhile Sugar boardroom

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elbow

THE BIRDS
BONES
MAGNIFICENT
MIRRORBALL
LITTLE FICTIONS
LIPPY KIDS
ONE DAY
GROUNDS

Mexican wavers: (clockwise from top left) Guy connects; Garvey and Peter interviewed on radio; exploring Mexico City; the band's stage; selfie!; Elbow's setlist.

"I NEVER LIKED NIRVANA. SORRY!"

Guy Garvey's tour bus distractions include a spot of delayed education…

BOOK:
Stefan Zweig
Shooting Stars *(1927)*

"I've been re-reading this [Zweig's take on 10 key historical events]. His fate-and-destiny ramblings are bordering on mania, but the fact that he believed what he wrote pulls you into his take on historical events. It makes them feel like real-life adventure stories."

FILM:
Close Encounters Of The Third Kind *(1977)*

"Again, this is something I've come back to. From the script to the sound design, it's a masterpiece. And now it has that extra dimension of being a great portrait of the 1970s."

MUSIC:
Nirvana
Smells Like Teen Spirit *(1991)*

"We've been touring North America, and I've been recording a show for 6Music as we've gone along. When I was in Seattle it reminded me that I never liked Nirvana. Sorry, but I just never got it. I thought it was less soulful than the other bands doing that stuff. Then he died! I hated that. So I've been asking people to educate me on Nirvana, I genuinely want people to enlighten me. I'm the same with reggae…"

< sidekick]. He was describing something that had happened with one of the would-be twats on the programme and said, 'He was all over it like a tramp on chips.' And everybody round the boardroom were proper laughing, including Lord Sugar. I thought, That's you lot in a nutshell. The image of a starving homeless man is funny? You horrible, fascist cunts. I hate that bloke."

At this point, we are distracted by a sombrero'd busker performing his particularly challenging rendition of a Mexican air, both voice and frantic strums rising to a deafening crescendo.

"He's now playing the 'Give me a dollar and I'll fuck off' bit," laughs Garvey. "I used to busk in Manchester, as a necessity. I know all the tricks."

IN THE FLESH, GARVEY HAS A roguish earthiness and mischievous glint that his more mannered broadcast persona doesn't transmit. There's the dominating, Henry VIII-style largeness which, coupled with his sorrowful, down-turned mouth and easy, avuncular manner, lends him an air of hard-fought resilience. Little wonder that Turner and the Potter brothers seem to defer to him as leader, though in every other aspect of Elbow, from writing credits to preparing setlists, they are exemplars of rock'n'roll democracy.

"We're just great mates, who've experienced a lot together," explains Turner. "Even when we're away on holiday we phone each other to say hello or recommend some music we've just heard. It's never been any different."

After an hour spent recuperating back at our respective hotels, we regroup at 4.30pm for the hour-long journey across Mexico City's dusty, gridlocked arteries to the festival site at the Autódromo Hermanos Rodríguez, AKA the local Grand Prix circuit.

Playing to vast crowds – there will be 80,000 music fans attending tonight – is something that Elbow take in their stride, their pitter-pattering, uplifting song-poems tailor-made for such gatherings. The congregational atmosphere of Elbow shows makes MOJO wonder if, like U2 – the first group Garvey ever saw live in a big arena – they're guided by a hidden religious rubric. 'God' is, after all, a recurring word in Garvey's lyrics, and on *Little Fictions* he even sings the inescapably churchy line, "Love is the original miracle."

"Well, I can't think of an Elbow song in the last few years that hasn't got some religious reference in it," he replies. "And when we're playing [in devoutly religious countries], you see a lot of the Pentecostal raised arms, people shutting their eyes, and they're Christians. And people would be forgiven for thinking *we* are Christians. But we're not, and the other content of our songs spells that out… But [religion] is definitely a frame of reference from my youth. My mother is a devout Catholic, a charismatic Christian. But there was no celebration in the church I went to, it was all very monotone and droney."

But it's not just the words. The way Garvey reaches his arms out to the audience, and gets them to join in his chants, is churchy too. Does he feel a bit like a guru?

"No," he harrumphs, "but in terms of the way we write, the way we get people to sing, we owe that to the U2 concert I saw at Manchester Arena [back in 2001]. At that point I'd never been to a football match, so I'd never actually been in a room with that many people. And when everyone started singing Pride (In The Name Of Love) at the top of their voices, as you can't sing it any other way, I found it profoundly affecting."

THE CONVERSATION SWIFTLY moves onto other, more recent, things that Garvey has found inspiring, including becoming a father (to eight-month-old Jack with his partner, actor Rachael Stirling), his stimulating BBC 6Music radio show and the positive response to his invitations to Dave Grohl and Sheila E

Mattia Zoppellaro (6)

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to dep for Jupp on *Little Fictions*, though neither drummer eventually contributed.

Such topics demand getting to the heart of the matter, which means more beer. So, after arriving at the carefully astro-turfed backstage area of the Corona Capital bash, more bottles are cracked open. Unlike many groups in their forties, Elbow don't appear to see the consumption of alcohol and staging a high-spec musical performance as incompatible. The fridge in their Portakabin is quickly denuded of beer and spirits, as they settle into a circle of chairs, ciggies lit, to resume their seemingly endless stream of anecdotes and friendly debates, one focusing on the inherent ugliness of the phrase, "I'll meet you halfway."

As stage time approaches, and Polly Harvey is spotted mounting an elongated golf buggy en route to her slot on a distant stage, everyone bar the band is shooed from the dressing room for Elbow to make their final preparations. "We're just going to put on our stage gear," winks Turner, before, 30 minutes later, the group emerge into the balmy night air wearing exactly the same scruffy clothes, but a noticeably steely, pre-battle look in their eye.

As they wend their way to the wings of the huge main stage, Garvey bumps into Dave Grohl, fresh from the airport, and the two oft-lauded good-guys of rock – who've never before met in person – share a "rock hug" and make a loose arrangement to meet later (both knowing there probably won't be time). Then Elbow take their positions on stage, augmented by their two female violinists/backing vocalists, and launch into their set, beginning with the beautiful The Birds and spectral The Bones Of You.

Initially, the crowd react tentatively, but after Garvey reads out a rousing welcome in Spanish, written on the back of a crumpled setlist, the crowd roars its approval and slowly begins to surrender to the roiling emotional undertow of Magnificent (She Says), Little Fictions and Lippy Kids. By the time the set ends with the dramatic rock detonations of Grounds For Divorce, tens of thousands of Mexicans are hollering its "whoah whoah" hook back at Garvey at deafening volume.

> **"WHAT'S THAT PROGRAMME'S CALLED, THE APPRENTICE? OH MY GOD, HIDEOUS BASTARDS."**
>
> **GUY GARVEY**

BACK IN THE PORTAKABIN, MORE booze is imbibed and Garvey insists MOJO tapes some more interview material on his own dictaphone. He's happy the band won over the crowd tonight – but then, he says, Elbow always do. "At the end they're *always* having it," he beams. "People might think, 'What the fuck is this, a cult?' But I don't consider myself a snake-skinned alien from another world. I'm keen to demystify what we do. You talked to me earlier about 'wonderment' but that's just 'cos I'm always pissed on-stage."

And what about the money and fame side of it – how does that mesh with Garvey's socialist beliefs? He must be earning a few bob from the John Lewis ad…

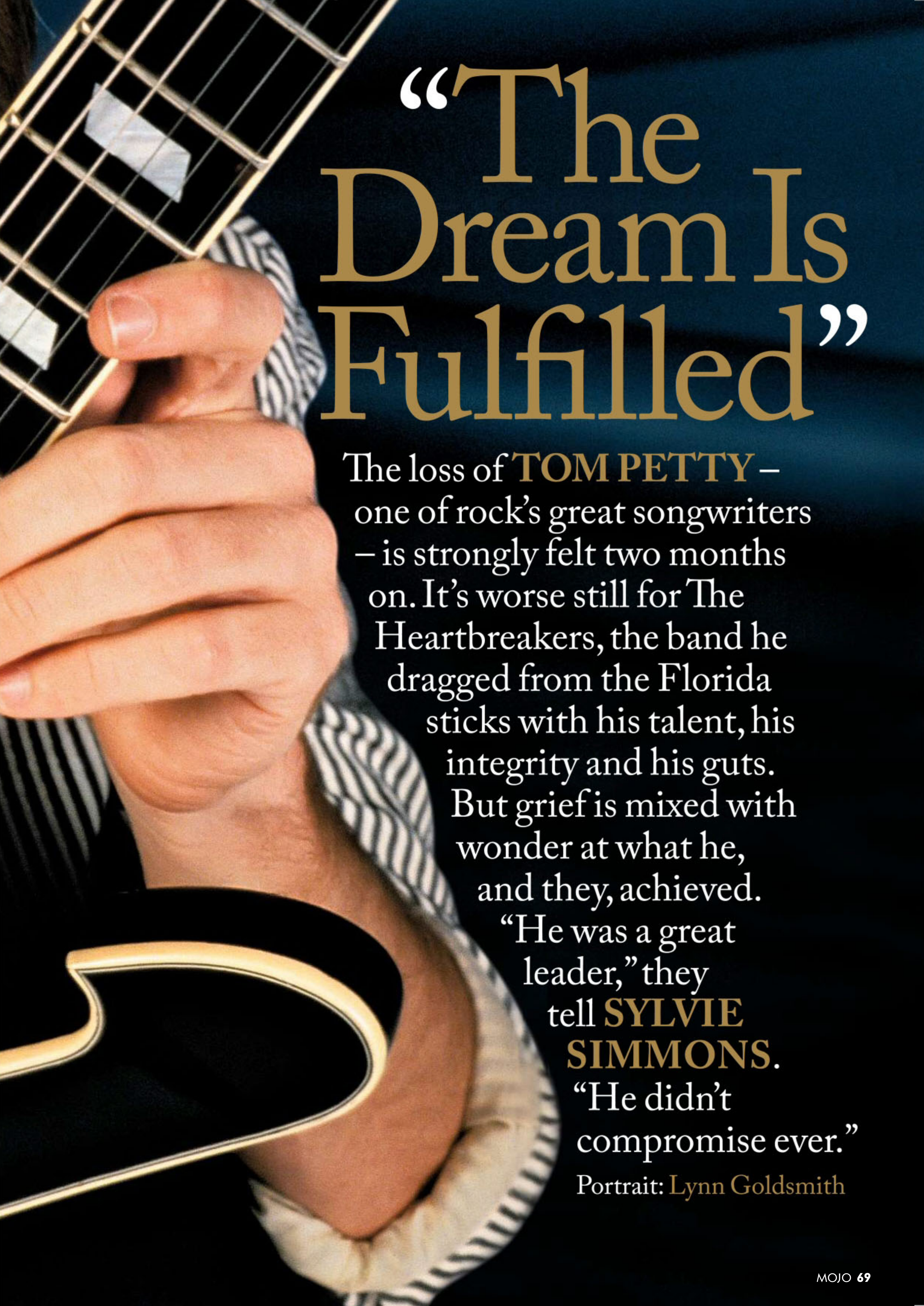
"I'm from a working class Northern background, one of seven kids brought up in a small house," he retorts. "Do you not think I've been hit with eyes of suspicion since the first time I was on telly? We're doing all right. But no one buys music any more. Without festivals none of today's bands would exist.

"So what you really asking?" he continues. "Is it that I've got millions and I should share it? The answer's no. (*Pause*) It's an interesting question, to ask on behalf of the general public: what is the average income these days for a Top 10 band?"

I wouldn't know, I say. You tell me.

Garvey surveys MOJO with his watery grey-blue eyes. After a perfectly timed beat he growls, "None of your business. Ha ha!"

Elbow's Greatest Hits is out now. They play a UK arena tour in March.



"The Dream Is Fulfilled"

The loss of **TOM PETTY** – one of rock's great songwriters – is strongly felt two months on. It's worse still for The Heartbreakers, the band he dragged from the Florida sticks with his talent, his integrity and his guts. But grief is mixed with wonder at what he, and they, achieved. "He was a great leader," they tell **SYLVIE SIMMONS**. "He didn't compromise ever."

Portrait: Lynn Goldsmith

THE END

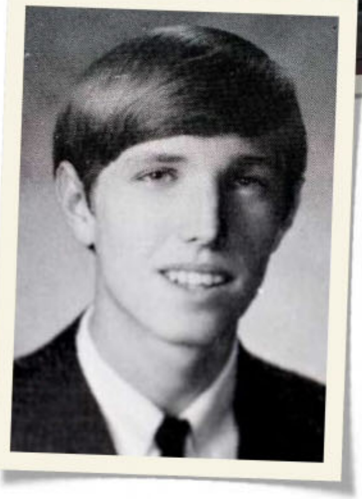
"I WAS AT HOME WHEN THE PHONE RANG," SAYS MIKE Campbell; you can hear the emotion in his voice. "My wife took the call and said, 'You've got to go to the hospital, Tom's on life support.' I said, Tom who? I couldn't conceive that it could be *Tom*, it must be another Tom. 'No,' she said, 'it's Tom,' and I went into a panic. I drove to the hospital like a maniac."

When Benmont Tench got the call about Tom Petty's cardiac arrest and joined the Heartbreakers guitarist at the hospital, he pictured finding Tom groggy but smiling that slow smile, saying, 'Well I guess I'll never smoke another cigarette.' "I was not expecting this," says Tench. "Not at all. This is earth-shattering."

"We were all there at the hospital," says Stevie Nicks, holding back tears. "All of us, there, all day, with him." Campbell and Tench called Tom Leadon of Mudcrutch in Nashville with the news. "I'm still processing it," says Leadon. "It was such a shock."

"What made it such a shock," says Campbell, "is Tom had been so happy. I'd never seen him happier, that's the absolute truth. His voice was great and that whole tour had just been phenomenal. He had some hip pain, but he told my manager, 'I'm going to do this tour if I have to sit in a chair.' He was going to fix it afterwards. There was no indication at all that he had any ideas of leaving us so soon" – one week exactly after the final show of Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers' 40th anniversary tour.

Petty did not regain consciousness. The life-support machine was turned off. He died aged 66 on October 2, 2017.



Lynn Goldsmith, Getty Images, Alamy

THE BEGINNING

ON OCTOBER 20, 1950, TOM PETTY WAS BORN IN Gainesville, Florida. It wasn't the happiest childhood. He was close to his mother but his alcoholic father was physically and emotionally abusive. Maybe having a band would give him another, more functional family. Tom was 13 when he put his first band together. Two years earlier he'd shaken Elvis Presley's hand on the movie set where his uncle worked and where Elvis was filming Follow That Dream. But it was seeing The Beatles on The Ed Sullivan Show in February '64 that made him buy wholesale into the rock'n'roll dream.

His band The Sundowners played covers and Petty, a lifelong record geek, had a mighty repertoire. Gainesville wasn't a large town, but it contained the main campus of the University Of Florida, "which made it big in the cultural sense," Campbell says. "We would get all the records as soon as they came out – American stuff like The Beach Boys, but also The Beatles, Stones, Animals, Kinks, all the great British bands, and all the American music the British bands turned us onto, Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf. I'd go over to Tom's and he would put on a record, and then turn it over and play it again and again, totally enamoured. It was all music with us all the time. We never lost that connection."

The Sundowners gave way to The Establishment, then The Epics. Tom Leadon, two years Petty's junior and with a band of his own, had jammed with The Epics pre-Petty. "After Tom joined, I was invited to rehearsals at his house, which was right across this little park where I grew up," says Leadon. "During the break Tom and I played guitar a little and showed each other some licks." Petty was a bass player. "The next day I went over to Tom's and hung out with him, and from that point on I was pretty much with him every day for hours a day. I quit doing everything else like sports and they asked me to be in the band.

"Tom was driving me to school – we were both in high school – and driving me home and then we'd have band rehearsal and hang out and

Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers, 1981 (from left) Mike Campbell, Benmont Tench, Stan Lynch, Tom, Ron Blair; (below left) Petty on-stage with Campbell, Austin, Texas, May 2, 2017; (bottom, left) Tom's Gainesville High School yearbook photo, 1968.

"MY WIFE SAID, 'TOM'S ON LIFE SUPPORT.' I SAID, TOM WHO? I COULDN'T CONCEIVE THAT IT COULD BE *TOM*…" *MIKE CAMPBELL*

on the weekends we got gigs. Even if Tom had a date – I wasn't dating yet; he was 16 or 17 and I was 14 or 15 and pretty shy – I would always go on his dates with him. I went to all the movies with them and if I missed the movie for whatever reason he would tell me the whole movie, describe every scene, tell me the dialogue doing the voices, which he did very well. Tom was a natural born entertainer from the beginning. Whether he was sitting with me in his bedroom telling me a story or a joke or playing a show."

Leadon first saw Petty play at Gainesville High School Auditorium. "They were in a battle of the bands, and the bands did synchronised steps as they played, which was very popular in North Florida at the time. Tom just looked so natural, like he was meant to be on stage, and always very professional. No matter what kind of little gig it was he would be dressed well and on time and he would talk to the audience. I looked up to him as a musical professional from the beginning. It seemed like he just knew how to do it."

IN THE SUMMER OF '69, THE EPICS BECAME MUDcrutch, with Mike Campbell and drummer Randall Marsh. Their ersatz manager, a young singer-songwriter who'd gone to Los Angeles in a failed attempt to make it, told them they needed to write their own songs. "He was very insistent that that was the only way we were going to get anywhere. The first time we tried to do it Tom and I worked at it all night long. I was discouraged but a ➢

Tom's times: (top left) Mudcrutch, Los Angeles, 1974 (from left) Campbell, Petty, Tom Leadon, Randall Marsh; (left) Traveling Wilburys, 1988 (clockwise from front left) Roy Orbison, Jeff Lynne, Bob Dylan, Tom, George Harrison; Petty backstage after a concert in Santa Cruz, CA, July 1979.

"I LOOKED UP TO HIM FROM THE BEGINNING. IT SEEMED LIKE HE JUST KNEW HOW TO DO IT." *TOM LEADON*

A week later Tom came in with a song and every week or two he'd come in with another one and they were getting better and better. His songwriting was what really set him apart – and also set us apart from the other bands around there. We were already talking about leaving Gainesville and going to California." Leadon ended up going there first at the invitation of his big brother Bernie (Flying Burrito Brothers; Eagles) and leaving the band. When Mudcrutch followed they had a new member, Benmont Tench.

"I was away in school," says Tench, "and a friend wrote me about a band he was roadying for. 'You've got to see them!' So when I came home to Gainesville I saw Mudcrutch play in a little bar. I remember thinking, There's something going on here, this guy's the real shit. Tom just had this vibe, an energy. I'd go to every gig they played and eventually they let me sit in with them. They said, 'Whenever you're home from school you should play with us.' So I left school." When they decided to go to LA and get a record deal, Tench went with them.

"It was an adventure into the unknown with a dream," says Campbell, "driving across America with a couple of cars, an old truck for our gear and Benmont's parents' station wagon. We didn't know what was going to happen. We were just chasing the promised land." In a way that adventure seems quintessentially Pettyesque – leaving home, moving on, driving into the great wide open, bound for glory. Had Petty and Bruce Springsteen arm-wrestled for the title of Champion Rock'n'Roll Romantic, it would have been close.

Mudcrutch did get a deal, with Shelter Records, and recorded an album. But the band was swiftly dropped. Petty was told he could stay on, but as a solo artist. While Tench and Campbell worked with Stan Lynch and Ron Blair as The Heartbreakers, Petty went into the studio to make what was ostensibly his solo debut. They gave him great musicians, like Jim Keltner and Al Kooper, but Petty wanted none of it. Campbell recalls, "Tom said, 'I want Mike and Ben or I'm not going to stay,' and he wouldn't back down. So, slowly we all got back in the studio. When they put his name on the album he said, 'OK, but I want Tom Petty *And* The Heartbreakers.' That's how he became the leader of the band, and he was a great leader. We would follow that leadership because he really had a vision."

"Even in Mudcrutch, when all of us wrote songs, he was obviously the leader," says Tench. "I don't know what I would have done with my life without him. I knew that I wanted to make music but I had no clue how to do anything. Tom and Mike had a clue, but especially Tom. I thought maybe we could go to Macon, Georgia and get a few shows but Tom had a much bigger vision: California, record deal, album. I don't think he thought there could be any obstacle. I mean, I'm sure he had his doubts and fears, but Tom was

Getty Images (2), Alamy.

a very focused guy, and if he believed in something, that was it."

Petty stayed that way even after they released the first Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers album and no one wanted to know. "At one gig," says Tench, "our record company guy came back with a box full of promotional copies of our first album and said, 'Here, you take them, I can't do anything with them.'" The US didn't start taking notice of the band until they got a rave review in UK weekly Sounds, which paved the way for Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers' first tour: opening in the UK for Nils Lofgren.

"Thank God for England," says Campbell. "In America we were going, Are we going to be dropped? But that tour saved us. I remember it like it was yesterday, driving around in a little bread truck going, Hey, we're where The Beatles and the Stones came from! We were staying at those little hotels that close at nine o'clock at night but we were living the dream.

"Our attitude was take no prisoners. The first gig, in Cardiff, Wales, I think, we were just going for it. Tom and I got so excited, we were running around back and forth and ended up getting our cords tangled up so much we were wrapped up together and the roadies had to come out and undo us. But the crowd really liked us. We were on fire. By the end of the tour I felt bad for Nils because the English press latched onto us and didn't latch onto him. That energy kicked our record up and it spilled over into the States, and then you start to feel the momentum. We could sense it was going to work."

HOLDING THE LINE

EVERYTHING HE DID, PETTY SANG ON THE BAND'S SIXTH album in 1985, was done with a Southern accent. By that time, bar playing the odd show or visiting the folks, he'd been away from Florida for a decade. "He loved California," says Tench. "He considered us a Los Angeles band that came from the South." Petty still spoke with a slow drawl and with his drowsy smile he looked like a laid-back, weed-smoking Southerner, at peace with himself and the world. "The amazing thing about my friend," says Campbell, "is that he *was* a laid-back kind of groovy guy, but if you stepped on his toes with his music, you'd better get out of his way. I don't care if you're in a suit or if you're a roadie or an A&R man, you're going down."

Their new record label MCA had a habit of getting in Tom's way. When they bought Shelter Records, Petty told them they'd not bought him and refused to give them the tapes of his third album, *Damn The Torpedoes*. At the end of each session, a friend would drive off with them in his car so that Petty could swear that he did not know where they were. *Torpedoes* came out on Backstreet, a new, small label distributed by MCA. It was a monster, Number 2 in the States in October 1979 and triple-platinum. MCA decided to exploit its success with a big hike in the cost of an album, starting with their follow-up, *Hard Promises*.

"When he was angry," says Tench, "he would get really quiet. He wouldn't raise his voice, he would lower it, and you could see his determination: 'Not on my record you're not.' If he decided something was wrong he wouldn't do it. He couldn't abide any injustice and he went to the mat for it."

Says Campbell: "It was in his nature. Maybe it was the stuff he went through with his dad when he was younger that made him tough, but Tom fought for stuff. He didn't compromise ever. He would not back down. I don't want to sound corny, but that was Tom." *Hard Promises* was put on hold, which was when their producer, Jimmy Iovine, suggested Tom release a single with Stevie Nicks.

Iovine, who was producing Nicks's solo debut *Bella Donna* – a job Nicks first offered to Petty; she was a longtime fan – said he couldn't hear a single. He said, 'Tom Petty's written a song that he's willing to let you have,'" says Stevie, "'Stop Dragging My Heart Around.' Jimmy thought it would be great to turn it into a duet – a hard, bluesy rock'n'roll song sung from a man *and* a woman's point of view. Tom said something once like 'No girls allowed in this band,' that they were a band of brothers. That band loved each other so much; they were very different people yet together they formed this whole society that became a society of one. I didn't want to be categorised as a girl, I wanted to be a peer. Really I wanted to be *in* that band and carve my initials in the cement but I knew I never could be. But I could be on the outskirts like a satellite, and I could learn from him and the band.

"Tom said, 'OK, let's give it a try.' We went into the studio two days later and we did it. It was so easy to do. I think that's why Tom didn't just throw me out immediately, because it *was* really easy. In a strange sort of way I think that we were maybe old souls who'd known each other before in another life or something, because our relationship was always so close."

"A Southern gentleman" is how Nicks describes him. "But he was the first person to get in your face if you were on the wrong path, for example when I was doing too much drugs, or even if he didn't like a song or a direction you were going musically. One time I was complaining about something and he just looked at me and said, 'You know, when I was little we had to turn the lights and fan off every night before it even got dark.' I had a pretty beautiful childhood really; my mother was strict but I had all I wanted. I don't think Tom had *anything* he wanted. Tom grew up poor and then ➢

THE BEST OF EVERYTHING

Ten songs steeped in essence of TOM PETTY, by MAT SNOW.

American Girl
TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS

AMERICAN GIRL

(from *Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers*, 1976)

Upending the usual male pursuit of the American dream, this surging retro-Byrdsy bicentennial anthem of "an American girl… thinkin'/That there was a little more to life somewhere else" compounds its plangent tug in Ron Blair's bass echoing Rod Stewart's Maggie May. Pop-rock nostalgia: not just a guy thing.

ANYTHING THAT'S ROCK'N'ROLL

(from *Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers*, 1976)

Anything That's Rock 'N' Roll
TOM PETTY
& THE HEARTBREAKERS

Just when Kiss seemed to have cornered the teen rock'n'roll anthem through OTT parody, TP&TH deftly mashed up an Eddie Cochran-alike lyric and a Tommy James And The Shondells' bubblegum-rock chug to witty, AM radio-friendly effect. For just one song, Cheap Trick had a brilliant rival.

HERE COMES MY GIRL

(from *Damn The Torpedoes*, 1979)

On their third LP, new producer Jimmy Iovine broke the band to stadium status with a sound so big it was as if they were already there. This highlight, co-written with Mike Campbell, sees Petty singing verses which build to the chorus's irresistible release.

INSIDER

(from *Hard Promises*, 1981)

Petty fan and pal since '78, Fleetwood Mac's Stevie Nicks broke down Tom's resistance to working together and "finally hustled her way in", as he chuckled in 2009. Among their works, Insider is a dashed-off but powerful ballad of relationships failing through unfulfilled "hard promises".

DON'T COME AROUND HERE NO MORE

(from *Southern Accents*, 1985)

TOM PETTY
HEART BREAKERS

A brilliant outlier in an LP schizophrenically split by theme (the Deep South) and producer, Jimmy Iovine taking care of business, Eurythmic Dave Stewart curve-balling synths and weirdness. An MTV '80s take on '60s sitar-and-strings psychedelia, Petty-Stewart's extravaganza is a pop masterpiece.

Runnin' down a dream: Tom takes the hometown acclaim at the University of Florida, Gainesville, February 10, 1983; (below) with Stevie Nicks, 1981.

"WHEN HE WAS ANGRY HE WOULD GET REALLY QUIET. YOU COULD SEE HIS DETERMINATION."

BENMONT TENCH

< he drove across the US and became a rich, successful rock star, but he dealt with all the other stuff too, I could see it in his eyes. He was one of the people who could look at the world through so many different sets of eyes. In a lot of ways I think he was Everyman."

ONE OF THOSE THINGS PETTY HAD DEALT WITH was drugs – cocaine in the '80s, like pretty much every rock musician in LA, and during a difficult time in his personal life, heroin. Recording *Southern Accents*, with Dave Stewart, was proving difficult and the pressure was on him to get it done. Petty took out his frustration by punching the wall, breaking his hand. He described it as a wake-up call. He had to learn to how to play again, he said, "not all over again but learning how to do things a little more different." *Southern Accents* was released in 1985, and in '86 Petty and The Heartbreakers went on the road with Bob Dylan as his band. It was Dylan's idea. He told Petty he wanted a band. He didn't say how long he needed them, but dates kept being added.

"I loved that tour," says Campbell. "I mean it got a little long when it got to Europe [in autumn 1987]. It started in Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the States, all over. But it was a great experience and it was good for us at the time because we were in one of those spaces where we were sick of each other so it was, 'Let's go play in Bob's band for a while.' It was really challenging for all of us and a great experience."

It was a rollercoaster year. In May 1987 an arsonist set fire to Petty's family home in LA, with Tom and family still in it. Fighting the fire, a hosepipe melted in Petty's hands and his housekeeper burnt her hair. He was shaken up but didn't turn bitter, crediting his friends for getting him through it. Then he and The Heartbreakers went back out, on their own and supporting Dylan until,

Getty Images (2)

two years later, Petty decided it was time, as he put it, "to get back to being us."

Singing backing vocals on the Dylan dates was Stevie Nicks. And Petty called her again when he set out with The Heartbreakers on their 30th anniversary tour, in 2006. "I said, You'd like me to open for you? Great, I think I can get my band together. He said, 'No, no, I just want *you* to come.' So off I went. I was supposed to do seven shows and I went home, then two days later he called and said, 'You have to come back.' So I headed back that same night and we ended up doing 28 shows and it was spectacular."

The Heartbreakers became used to Petty's occasional side projects. "Tom had never said anything like, I want to do a solo album some day," says Campbell of Petty's 1989 solo debut *Full Moon Fever*. "It was just, 'Oh, I bumped into Jeff Lynne at the corner of the street and we've written this song and we thought we'd come over to your house and record it.' Then it was, 'Oh we just wrote this other song, I Won't Back Down,' and before long it was a record. Tom said, 'I'm not breaking up the band; it's just something I want to do.' He did that throughout his career when he felt like it."

The Traveling Wilburys for example.

Campbell: "With The Heartbreakers, Tom's the leader. Everybody looks at him and goes, 'OK, what are we doing?' But with the Wilburys it's a committee. I think it was nice for Tom to have that pressure taken off. And he was working with Bob Dylan, Roy Orbison, George Harrison, people who we looked up to in our childhood and idolised, so to be playing with them was great for his confidence and growth. Bands, like any relationship, can get a little stale. I think that what kept us together for all this time was that everyone was allowed to stretch out and do other things, get some other energy and bring it back to what we do together."

TIME TO MOVE ON

MAYBE IT WAS BEING AWARDED THE KEYS TO THE CITY of Gainesville in 2006, or the documentary Runnin' Down A Dream that got Petty thinking about Mudcrutch. Tom Leadon had been asked to appear in the film and the director, Peter Bogdanovich, met him in Nashville at the music school where he taught. Bogdanovich told Leadon that Petty was thinking about getting Mudcrutch back together. Hearing that, "It felt like a lightning bolt hit me in the head and went right down to my feet," said Leadon. Bogdanovich, it seems, was less enthusiastic. "I could hear Peter saying, 'I told Tom [Petty] Why, Tom, why?' and I said, Stop saying that. Tell him I'm up for it." Some months later Petty called. "As we talked I could see he was developing this plan more and more," including an album and a tour. Petty flew Leadon and Randall Marsh out to Malibu to stay at his house.

"That first night we just stayed up late and talked for hours. The next day as soon as we started playing, Tom on bass like the old days, it just felt like I was home again. I talked to all the other guys later and they all said the same thing, Tom too. He let me know that I was family to him, that if something ever happened, like a major medical problem, he would cover it." Leadon learned of Petty's death when Campbell and Tench called him. "That night I wrote a song," says Leadon. "It's called My Best Old Friend."

Stevie Nicks joined up with Petty once more, at this July's show in London's Hyde Park – another anniversary celebration, The Heartbreakers' 40th. "After the show," says Nicks, "we were able to just sit in the bar and simply talk. My manager Sheryl [Louis] snuck around and took some photos. He looked up and all of us were around him at this oval table, and in the photo he looked like the little flower right in the middle of all these leaves. That was the last time I saw him until the hospital. The tears won't stop."

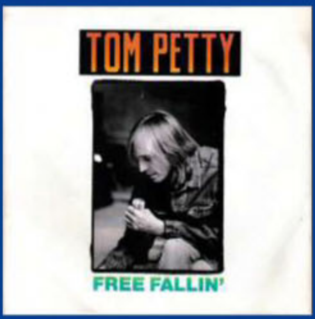
"My whole life," says Tench. "I've wanted everyone to know what a heavy cat Tom is – the real deal. He was a master songwriter who had the craft but also a point of view. There was an uplift in the melody even when the lyrics were pretty melancholy, like American Girl" – the closing song of their final concert, at the Hollywood Bowl on September 25. "We'd hit a new level in playing on that tour, some new level of musical communication," Tench continues. "It's funny, after 41 years of making records, to feel like it's unfinished."

"He was all about looking forward," Campbell says. "We talked about the future. We didn't discuss doing another album, but then we never did. We would just get to a break and one of us would go, 'Oh I've got some songs,' and we'd start recording. I'm so sad that I'll never get to see what those songs might have been. I've lost my songwriting partner. And we were such a good fit."

What they *did* talk about was more touring. Although Petty had told Rolling Stone he wanted to stay at home with the grandkids, Campbell says "There was never a thing of, 'I'm tired, I don't want to do this any more.' We were talking about doing the *Wildflowers* tour next year, with smaller venues and guest singers on different songs from that album. Tom even said, 'Let's go to Australia!' and he'd always hated going that far away. I think he was just happy that we'd never done a better tour and the band was so good.

"The last night," adds the guitarist, "we walked out on-stage to start the show and I distinctly remember looking at Tom walking out with his hands up and thinking, This guy is so happy. He's so proud to be standing in front of these people, standing in front of this band, proud to be who he is and proud that everything is all coming together and the dream is fulfilled. And I was looking in his eyes thinking, Wow, if he's that happy, then I'm happy too. But here we are…" He pauses a while. "I'm just grateful for what we had."

THE BEST OF EVERYTHING PART TWO!



FREE FALLIN'
(from *Full Moon Fever*, 1989)

LA-based former ELO boss and studio wizard Jeff Lynne bonded with fellow future Traveling Wilbury Tom on Petty's solo debut. Lynne spotted the gold in a simple keyboard lick and improvised verse about LA ennui, building an arm-waving anthem on Petty and Mike Campbell's dreamy layered acoustics.

I WON'T BACK DOWN
(from *Full Moon Fever*, 1989)

Cussed and victorious in disputes with the music biz, standing on his principles was core to Petty but only here made a personal statement in song, so rawly expressed that he needed reassurance from cameo player George Harrison that it worked. A rousingly militant sing-along, it's become heartland rock's My Way.

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW IT FEELS
(from *Wildflowers*, 1994)

Petty's second solo outing may be his most consistently satisfying album, producer Rick Rubin spotlighting the personal Petty voice in a retro-nuevo sound of non-synth instruments writ large. Built on Tom's drum loop, "You don't know how it feels to be me" pegs Petty's edgily everyman persona.

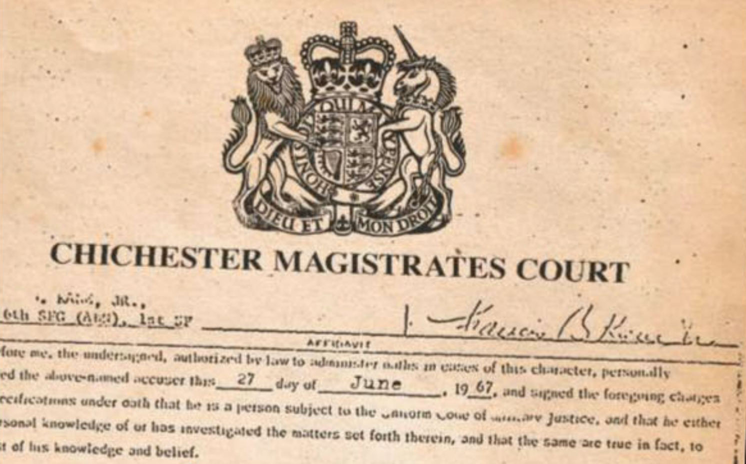
SWINGIN'
(from *Echo*, 1999)

The '90s for Petty was a decade of drugs, divorce and demons, all feeding into the commercial flop *Echo*. Knocked off in the studio as the band floundered on another track, Swingin' portrays American Girl "over 21/In trouble with the law" but defiant with Tom ambiguously on her side.

AMERICAN DREAM PLAN B
(from *Hypnotic Eye*, 2014)

AMERICAN DREAM PLAN B

Evoking Cameo's Word Up, Petty's loser monologue is backed by a knuckleduster guitar riff which starbursts into the release of "I got a dream I'm gonna fight 'til I get it" – wish fulfilment in the teeth of the American dream gone bad, Petty's hopeful vision trumped by reality.



CHICHESTER MAGISTRATES COURT

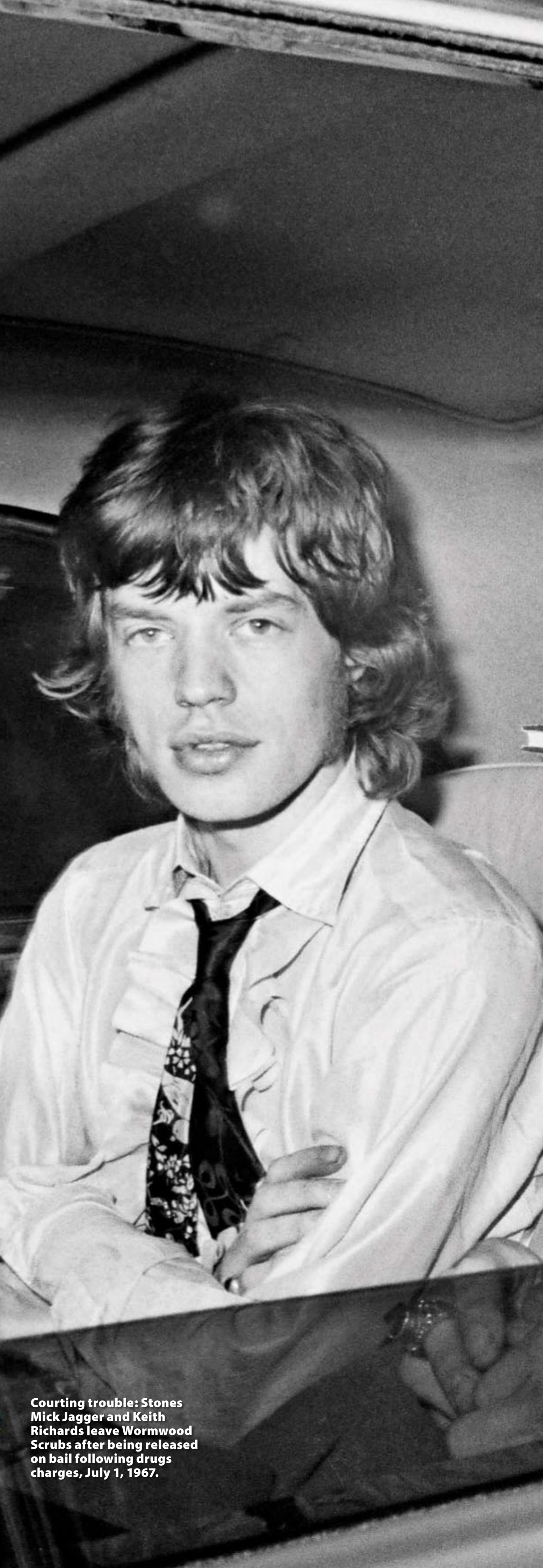
[illegible], JR.,
6th SFG (Abn), 1st SF

AFFIDAVIT

fore me, the undersigned, authorized by law to administer oaths in cases of this character, personally
ed the above-named accuser this 27 day of June, 19 67, and signed the foregoing charges
ecifications under oath that he is a person subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and that he either
sonal knowledge of or has investigated the matters set forth therein, and that the same are true in fact, to
t of his knowledge and belief.

The Devil's Work

Their Satanic Majesties Request **was THE ROLLING STONES' acid-rock folly, conceived and executed at the height of the British establishment's assault on the 'young revolution', with the group in and out of court (and jail) as often as the recording studio. But its dark madness, which slammed the door on psychedelic 1967, remained ingrained in their DNA. "It's a Grimms' fairy tale," discovers MARK PAYTRESS.**



Courting trouble: Stones Mick Jagger and Keith Richards leave Wormwood Scrubs after being released on bail following drugs charges, July 1, 1967.

Powell/Express/Hulton Archive/Getty Images

JUNE 27, 1967: SWINGING LONDON HAS GONE TECHNICOLOR. BOUTIQUES are filled with Beautiful People and beautiful sounds. Everyone's buying *Sgt. Pepper* and A Whiter Shade Of Pale. Freedom is in the air. But not for Mick Jagger.

Found guilty of illegally possessing two amphetamine pills at Chichester Magistrates' Court earlier that day, The Rolling Stones' frontman and youth figurehead was in a prison cell in Lewes, near the East Sussex coast, awaiting sentence.

Girlfriend Marianne Faithfull, who six months earlier announced that she'd like to see the whole structure of society collapse, arrived bearing gifts: three packs of cigarettes, volumes on Tibet and modern art and, perhaps with a view to helping Prisoner No. 7856 find a way out of his predicament, a chessboard.

BEATLES
A WHITER SHADE OF PALE
PROCOL HARUM
SHE'S A RAINBOW
THE ROLLING STONES
LONDON
2000 light years from home
DECCA
she's a rainbow

Something in the air: (from top) The Beatles' gamechanging ***Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band***; Procol Harum's singular Number 1; two psychedelic Rolling Stones singles off ***Their Satanic Majesties Request***.

©Michael Cooper Collection, Alamy, Rex

"Mick was utterly heartbroken," Faithfull recalled in her autobiography. Staring at weeks, possibly months in prison, Jagger wrung his hands and cried uncontrollably, saying, "What am I gonna do?" again and again and again.

Still coming down after a trippy time with Steve Marriott and mates in Richmond, Faithfull's widescreen perspective made her conscious of how the scene would look to the warders with their buzz cuts and mistrust of pampered pop stars. "Pull yourself together," she said, handing him a notepad.

After the door slammed closed and Faithfull's footsteps faded into silence, the words came: "It's so very lonely, you're a thousand light years from home…"

Two days later, Jagger received a three-month jail sentence, and was packed off to Brixton Prison. His co-defendant, Keith Richards, was given a year. Across town, at Olympic Studios in leafy Barnes, west London, Studio 1 fell silent as work was suspended on what was to become the Stones' most controversial and colourful, daring yet denigrated album.

"There's a lot of rubbish on *Satanic Majesties*," Jagger opined years later. "Too much time on our hands, too many drugs, no producer to tell us, 'Enough…'"

Engineer Glyn Johns, who sat through nine months of on-off sessions, recalls little else but "unadulterated drivel". His younger brother Andy, who joined as tape-op midway through, regarded the album as a poor man's *Sgt. Pepper*. "It was bizarre," he told Goldmine magazine. "You got Bill Wyman out there playing vibraphone?" Keith Richards has dismissed *Their Satanic Majesties Request* as "a load of crap" so often that it's practically a mantra. And yet the Stones later successfully turned two of its key tracks, She's A Rainbow and 2000 Light Years From Home into live favourites, while genre aficionados routinely rate the record as one of the finest examples of psychedelia at its tripped-out zenith.

PERHAPS THERE WAS HINT OF the Stones' approaching meltdown – or at least, the part owed by their collision with the establishment – when, on January 22, the group began 1967 performing their new single, Let's Spend The Night Together, on British TV's light entertainment staple, The London Palladium Show. All seemed well until, at the end of the programme, the group refused to join guests on the revolving stage – the traditional finale – igniting outrage in the press lasting for days after.

The song itself was three minutes of high-spirited pop ruttishness with a suggestive title, recorded the previous November. Despite the in-retrospect-ominous sound of police truncheons rendering the claves-like clicks at 1:40, it was far more conciliatory and melodious than its predecessor, Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby, Standing In The Shadow?, the Stones' cacophonous farewell to a year marked by a string of singles encased in darkness and psychological breakdown. But Jagger had something to prove.

Days earlier, on the hugely influential Ed Sullivan Show in the States, Jagger had acquiesced to the host's demand that he desexualise the chorus. Singing "Let's spend some time together", he rolled his eyes disapprovingly, which only seemed to add to the humiliation. Back in London, he was permitted the words but refused the ride. "That revolving stage isn't an altar," he said afterwards. "It's a drag."

Amid the Palladium furore, Jagger and Stones manager Andrew Oldham virtually came to blows. Recalling the incident years later, Oldham portrayed it as a "childish gesture", an attempt to save face in the wake of the Sullivan episode. But once again, there was something else going on beneath the surface. It was, he wrote, "just as likely to have been part of a plan to test me where I would hurt, with the kill to come later."

After a long winter lay-off, the Stones made their studio return on February 9, 1967, block-booking Studio 1 at Olympic for two weeks. Things began sluggishly. According to Bill Wyman, Brian Jones and Keith Richards were absent for the first couple of days because they'd absconded to Munich to monitor progress on Jones's film score for Volker Schlöndorff's A Degree Of Murder, starring Jones's girlfriend Anita Pallenberg. In their absence, a tentative first stab was made at She's A Rainbow – a song inspired by Marianne Faithfull with an evocative hook, "she comes in colours", airlifted right off *Da Capo*, the recently released second album by Hollywood Hills mysterions Love.

The Stones were hip to happenings on the West Coast, and not just folk rock groups turning towards ➢

"THERE'S A YOUNG REVOLUTION ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE. WE'RE MOVING TOWARD A NEW AGE IN IDEAS AND EVENTS."

BRIAN JONES

have you seen your mother, baby, standing in the shadow?
THE ROLLING STONES
LONDON
LONDON
LET'S SPEND THE NIGHT TOGETHER
RUBY TUESDAY
THE ROLLING STONES

It's Grimm down south: (below) Michael Cooper's shoot for the *Satanic Majesties* sleeve; (above left) the Stones on-stage at the London Palladium, January 22, 1967; (right) Jagger refuses to play revolving stage game despite Andrew Oldham's protest; (insets) Stones rockier '66-67 singles.

Stepping out: Mick and Keith outside Chichester Crown Court after being charged with possessing drugs, May 10, 1967; (insets) the movie scored by Brian Jones; influential Love LP *Da Capo*.

psychedelia. Brian Jones, their earliest and most adamant acid advocate, was becoming something of an agent provocateur, seeing the role of a Rolling Stone as significantly more than that of entertainer.

"There's a young revolution in thought and manner about to take place," he told NME's Keith Altham around the time of the February sessions. It was a remarkable interview, alive to all the cultural undercurrents that would define 1967. "We are questioning some of the basic immoralities which are tolerated in present-day society – the war in Vietnam, persecution of homosexuals, illegality of abortion, drug-taking… I believe we're moving toward a new age in ideas and events."

BUILDING WORK ON THE new age was rudely interrupted when, on Sunday, February 12, police arrived at Redlands, Keith Richards' moated residence near West Wittering, Sussex, and busted Jagger, Richards and art dealer/pal Robert Fraser.

"What started the problems with the police," Altham told me, "was that Brian gave an interview to two undercover News Of The World reporters who thought he was Mick. Andrew was instructed to sue them for quoting the wrong person. And when the paper realised they'd got it wrong, in order to justify their position, they set them up for the bust."

Jagger, Richards and Oldham were inadvertently thrust into the eye of Jones's "young revolution". Meanwhile, Bill Wyman, assisted by Brian Jones on concert harp and Charlie Watts on drums, was putting down a backing track at Olympic studios. He called it Acid In The Grass.

Jones was all over another new piece, his astral mellotron duelling with Keith Richards' steely guitar on a sketch for a future 2000 Light Years From Home, then known as Loose Woman. This one foreshadowed an imminent journey into the sonic unknown. *Satanic Majesties* had lift-off.

After sessions ended on February 24, the Stones scarpered. Jagger, Richards and Jones took off for Marrakesh where they could smoke hashish with impunity and lose – or perhaps find – themselves in the bustling Berber souks. One evening, Jagger extolled the virtues of acid over dinner with society photographer Cecil Beaton. "It would mean so much to you," he insisted. "You'd never forget the colours."

Marianne Faithfull has a vivid memory of Mick on acid, "twisting… like a cobra coming out of its basket" to the mystic Sufi sounds of Ali Akbar Khan. Keith Richards tended to see birds flying. Jones's trips were messier affairs, often plagued by paranoia and bouts of violence. During the Morocco trip, his girlfriend Pallenberg took off with Richards in his chauffeur-driven Bentley Continental. Jones was left stranded.

By the time the Stones regrouped for a month-long continental tour, starting in Helsingborg, Sweden on March 25, Jones and Richards were barely speaking. The Jones/Pallenberg/Richards power base that had been developing since the previous autumn, rooted in long nights at Jones's Courtfield Road flat and resulting in one magnificent new song, the 'Tudorbethan' Ruby Tuesday – which was paired on 45 with Let's Spend The Night Together – had collapsed.

A further twist came on May 10, when Jagger and Richards appeared at Chichester Magistrates' Court to face charges relating to the Redlands bust. The police chose exactly that moment to arrest

MEN COULDN'T OWN HER!
...but they knew she would do anything to protect her secret!
"A DEGREE OF MURDER"
TECHNICOLOR
ANITA PALLENBERG · WERNER ENKE
HANS PETER HALLWACHS · MANFRED FISCHBECK
STEREO
da capo
LOVE

CHICHESTER MAGISTRATES COURT

WATCHING THE DETECTIVES

Beware! If you were a '60s pop star, Norman Pilcher and his CID pals were on your trail, writes PAUL TRYNKA.

"HE WAS COLLECTING busts – and he was collecting headlines," says Donovan, who enjoyed the grim accolade of being Norman Pilcher's first celebrity scalp. The Detective Sergeant's modus operandi varied little over his period of fame: working closely with the UK press, he stalked pop stars, invariably with a photographer or reporter in tow, and always managed to locate drugs. There's no proof he was being paid for the scoops he provided to the press; it's possible that fame alone drove him. "We called him 'Groupie Pilcher'," says Caroline Coon of drugs charity Release. "Because those cops wanted fame. To glory in it."

In late 1965, pop stars were regarded as lucrative economic assets. By the next year, they were a threat to society. "We were spreading the manifesto, of Kerouac, of freedom of thought," says Donovan. "And people were watching."

Literally, in Donovan's case. In June 1966 he and friend 'Gypsy' Dave Mills had returned from a trip to the US and moved into a third floor Edwardian flat in Maida Vale. The drugs squad rented an overlooking flat to keep tabs on them. Finally, Pilcher manipulated a girlfriend of Gyp's to help them gain entrance.

"Gyp opens the door and in come nine burly policemen with Pilcher," Donovan recalls. "I am naked, grabbing onto the policemen's necks and they're smashing up beautiful things in the room. It's terrible."

Donovan readily admits to smoking weed, but not the two ounces of Lebanese that Pilcher triumphantly brandished, moments into the raid: "We couldn't even find that stuff to buy in London! We would never buy that much. Not that we thought anything bad about it." Post-bust, Pilcher asked him to sign an album.

When Donovan and Gyp finally returned to the flat after being charged, the phone rang: "It was a guy at the Daily Mirror who said: 'Tell me the whole story.' The next call was George Harrison, who offered us £10,000 for legal fees. We said, We're going away until it blows over. George said, 'It won't blow over. We'll be next.'"

Pilcher would bust, or attempt to bust, all the pop aristocracy, including Harrison, John Lennon, Brian Jones and Eric Clapton – who was warned by Coon's people and fled through the back door at King's Road hippy haunt the Pheasantry as Pilcher was knocking on the front. The policeman's efforts were rewarded by immortality of an enigmatic sort, in that he is regularly alleged to have inspired Lennon's "semolina pilchard" in I Am The Walrus.

Pilcher's downfall came in September 1973 following the trial of Basil Sands, who was convicted of drugs smuggling despite the dubious claims of Pilcher and team that Sands was co-operating with them. Pilcher's boss, Detective Chief Inspector Victor Kelaher, evaded prosecution due to ill-health. Pilcher escaped to Australia, but was arrested in Fremantle and extradited for trial at the Old Bailey. Together with two fellow detectives he was convicted of perjury. Justice Melford Stevenson, already celebrated for jailing the Kray twins, told Pilcher, "You poisoned the wells of criminal justice… and betrayed your comrades in the Metropolitan Police Force, which enjoyed the respect of the civilised world – what remains of it." He was sentenced to four years, served two, and now lives in Kent.

> "WE CALLED HIM GROUPIE PILCHER. BECAUSE THOSE COPS WANTED FAME. TO GLORY IN IT." CAROLINE COON

Alamy, John Kelly/Camera Press, Photoshot/Avalon, Getty Images, Camera Press

Jones. “It was a set-up,” claimed Prince Stanislaus ‘Stash’ Klossowski, the dandy son of painter Balthus who was busted with Jones that day. “As we left the flat, under arrest, a television crew was already there filming us. Brian was a very sensitive artist who was hurt and terrified by it all.”

Worse still, Jones left his flat and listened to the advice of the lawyers. “Everyone was told to keep away from each other,” said Stash, “but the only person who did was Brian. It was a very bad time for him to be on his own.”

JAGGER, RICHARDS AND Jones were all bailed to face charges in court later in the year. With the Stones’ very existence now under threat, Jagger and Andrew Oldham met for a summit meeting at Olympic on May 16. With all legal matters in the hands of lawyers, they discussed arrangements for the following five days’ sessions, including a photo-op visit from the press, and feasibly, the producer’s role. The Palladium stand-off still hung in the air, so too the disappointing chart run of Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby, which the band blamed on Oldham’s production shortcomings. Besides, Oldham was already overseeing the Small Faces in an adjoining studio, and working with Del Shannon.

The producer, now a clad-in-black hipster with stubble and fedora, stuck around, an enigmatic figure behind Glyn Johns at the 4-track recording console. Out on the studio floor, newly invited session ace Nicky Hopkins sat at the piano and worked his magic. She’s A Rainbow, sketched out in February, was transformed. Hopkins had conjured up the Mozartian music box motif that threads with cut-glass elegance through the song. With the addition of childlike backing vocals (via some tape-speed manipulation) and a string arrangement by Oldham session regular and future Led Zeppelin bassist John Paul Jones, She’s A Rainbow now glistened with a baroque ornamentation. This was pop as art.

The Stones were suddenly on a roll. More work was done on 2000 Light Years From Home, clearly an epic in the making. And then there was Old King Cole, a dark, dramatic backing track. Once again Hopkins’ piano, this time edgy and urgent, set the pace, followed by a mad dash of drums, guitar and mellotron. All the recent turbulence in the Stones’ lives was here.

The climax, a riot of Eastern scales and staccato sax sounds both flowing from Jones’s wheezing mellotron, was extraordinary. The embattled Stone gave a howling, devil-may-care performance unlike anything heard before on a pop recording.

With Jagger and Richards’ trial due at the end of the month, the Stones returned to Olympic between June 9 and 13. The first day was spent working on a new Keith Richards song, Citadel. ➢

“IT WAS A SET-UP. AS WE LEFT THE FLAT, UNDER ARREST, A TELEVISION CREW WAS ALREADY THERE FILMING US.”
PRINCE STASH

She’s a rainbow: Jagger with Marianne Faithfull on the set of Girl On A Motorcycle, 1967; (left from top) Mick, Andrew Oldham (standing) and Glyn Johns in Olympic studio, Barnes; three Stones with Anita Pallenberg; Jones and Prince Stanislaus ‘Stash’ Klossowski charged, May 5, ’67.

The BEATLES
All You Need Is Love
Baby, You're a Rich Man
Capitol
THE ROLLING STO
WE LOVE YOU
dandelion

Richards and Bill Wyman listen to a playback, Olympic studios, Barnes, May '67; (right, from top) Jagger and John Lennon, May '67; Beatles and Stones singles spread the love.

It was the first Stones song in months built around a potent electric guitar chord sequence.

Richards now began to stamp his authority on proceedings. With the group short of new material, he revived a demo recorded in November '66 as Sometimes Happy, Sometimes Blue. On it, Richards had improvised a melody over a backing straight out of the Love songbook. Now titled Dandelion, with an entirely new lyric sung by Jagger (and reputedly backed by John Lennon and Paul McCartney), it was recast as a slice of flyaway psychedelic pop in the vein of recent Traffic and Pink Floyd 45s.

The Stones now had around half an album's worth of half-finished material. With the trial just two weeks away, they took another break. Wyman and Watts headed back to their country retreats. Jagger and Faithfull flew to Tangier, Richards and Pallenberg to Paris.

High on hippy sounds and pastimes, Brian Jones kept on going, joining a small British contingent on a flight bound for the Monterey International Pop Festival. Months later, on his Monterey hit single, Eric Burdon namechecked the English exotic as "His Majesty Prince Jones". Onstage at the festival, Jones would introduce the show-stopping Jimi Hendrix Experience, whose version of Dylan's Like A Rolling Stone came close to describing the Little Prince's dissociated state: on his own, with increasingly no direction home.

BACK IN LONDON, THE SUMMER belonged to The Beatles. Released on June 1, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* marked the debut of The Rock LP. And on June 25, they unveiled a new song that, via the first ever television satellite broadcast, sent the message of Jones's young revolution around the world. Mick, Keith and Marianne were there, in their smocks and foulards, chorusing All You Need Is Love to a global audience.

Four days later, the message had changed dramatically. "We love you!" cried desperate fans outside Chichester Magistrates Court, as Jagger and Richards were led away to begin their jail sentences, a suspiciously vengeful three months and one year respectively.

That evening, in his Brixton cell, Jagger again turned to his notebook. Bailed the next morning after lightning work by the Stones' legal team, he emerged with a lyric that would transform gnarly Old King Cole into an alternative 'love' anthem, one that burned with indignation and gratitude. On July 1, proving not all the cannons of the establishment were arrayed against them, a leader in The Times newspaper written by editor William Rees-Mogg and entitled "Who Breaks A Butterfly On A Wheel" pointed out the absurdities of the sentences. "Mr Jagger's is about as mild a drug case as can ever have been brought before the Courts," wrote Rees-Mogg.

> **"I'D NEVER DETECTED MUCH GENUINE VAUDEVILLE IN THE STONES. THERE WAS ALWAYS A SNEER TO WHAT THEY DID."**
> KEITH ALTHAM

Gered Mankowitz (5), Alamy (2)

Olympic games: (clockwise from top left) Jones, Richards, Jagger and Charlie Watts recording tracks for *Their Satanic Majesties* in Barnes, May '67.

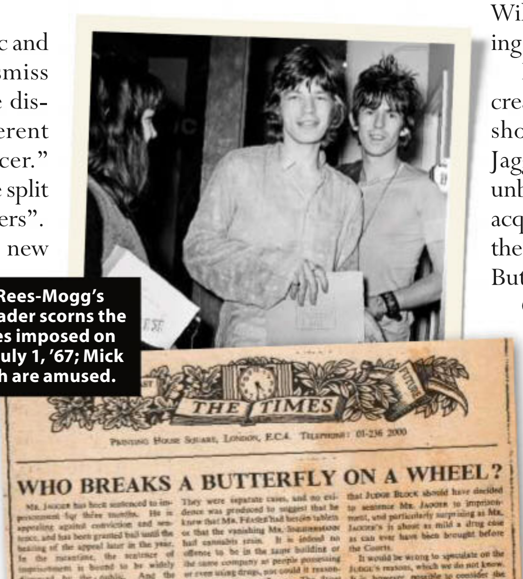
The next day, the Stones were back at Olympic, where they would spend most of the month getting as much down on tape as they could before Jagger and Richards' appeal hearings on July 31. Midway through the sessions, on July 16, Jagger arrived with the usual trail of hangers-on plus, once more, Lennon and McCartney. Beat poet Allen Ginsberg, fresh from a 'Legalise Pot' rally in Hyde Park earlier that day, came too, though the man Richards later described as "an old gasbag" wasn't let near a microphone for the We Love You vocal overdub session. Ginsberg was far more gracious. "They looked like little angels," he recalled, "Botticelli Graces singing together for the first time."

Holed up at the Priory, the nearby rehab facility, for much of the month, Brian Jones missed the session. Andrew Oldham was there, even coming up with the idea of prefacing the song with the sound of a slammed prison door, but it was his last active contribution to the Stones' career. The door had closed on him too.

The denouement came when Oldham and Gered Mankowitz, the Stones' regular photographer, turned up at the studio in mid-July to discuss artwork for the projected album cover. But Michael Cooper, who'd shot the *Sgt. Pepper* sleeve, had already been given the job. Oldham remembers "another night of nothing recorded, just a lot of drugfoolery and clever asides".

To Mankowitz, the fallout was "traumatic and pretty brutal", he told me. "But to dismiss Andrew as a producer does him a terrible disservice. A producer can take many different forms and he was a really great producer." Mankowitz came to see the true cause of the split as a classic case of "sons rejecting their fathers".

Oldham had little time for the Stones' new musical turn. "It was all Ravi Shankar to me," he wrote in his 2Stoned memoir. The brilliant young man who'd once declared The Rolling Stones as "a way of life" had changed his mind. They'd become "a waste of life".



William Rees-Mogg's Times leader scorns the sentences imposed on Jagger, July 1, '67; Mick and Keith are amused.

THE TIMES

PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE, LONDON, E.C.4. TELEPHONE: 01-236 2000

WHO BREAKS A BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL?

Mr. Jagger has been sentenced to imprisonment for three months. He is appealing against conviction and sentence, and has been granted bail until the hearing of the appeal later in the year. In the meantime, the sentence of imprisonment is bound to be widely

They were separate cases, and no evidence was produced to suggest that he knew that Mr. Fraser had heroin tablets or that the vanishing Mr. Sneiderman had cannabis resin. It is indeed no offence to be in the same building or the same company as people possessing or even using drugs, nor could it reason-

that Judge Block should have decided to sentence Mr. Jagger to imprisonment, and particularly surprising as Mr. Jagger's is about as mild a drug case as can ever have been brought before the Courts.

It would be wrong to speculate on the Judge's reasons, which we do not know. It is, however, possible to consider the

One July evening, the Stones and assorted guests (Paul McCartney likely among them) each pulled a percussion instrument from a large box. They beat out a pedestrian rhythm and started up a campfire-style sing-along. When their voices tired, they continued tapping and shaking, throwing in the odd primitive grunt, until there were no more joints to pass round. Apparently, they had several goes at this. It was the kind of thing that Oldham deplored.

"India with a touch of Arabian Nights!" enthused Brian Jones, when he played the definitive, 15-minute Sing This All Together to Keith Altham in August. The jam eventually topped and tailed the first side of *Their Satanic Majesties Request*.

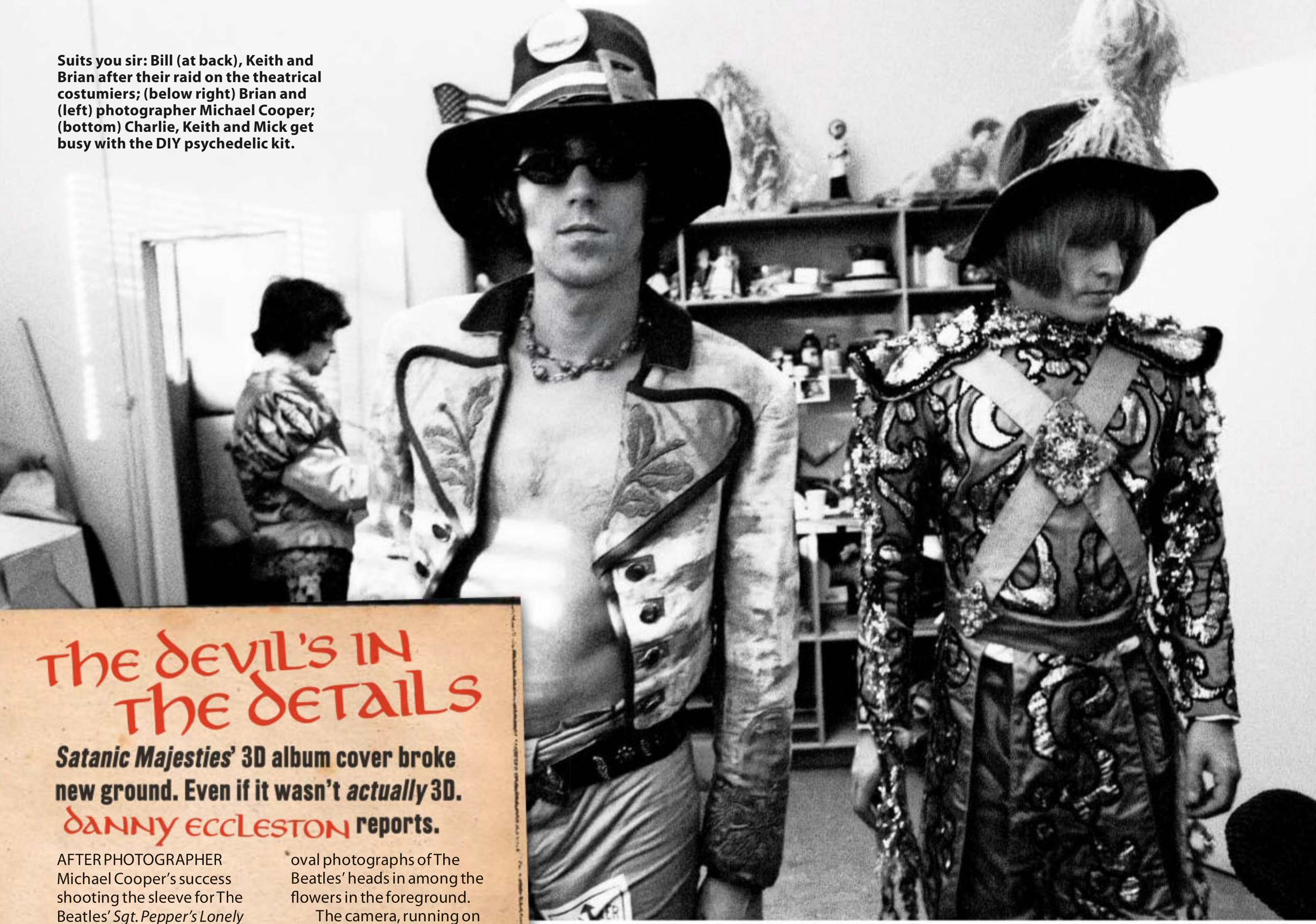
BY THE END OF JULY, THE Stones had three more songs in the bag – five including Sing This All Together. One, Bill Wyman's In Another Land, owed its existence to the continuing chaos. Arriving at the studio on July 13, finding only Charlie Watts and Nicky Hopkins for company, the bassist – who'd been producing soulful-psych hopefuls The End for months – revived the song he'd trialled back in February. Glyn Johns lathered Wyman's voice – every bit as impassive as his expression – in vibrato. Steve Marriott, recording with the Small Faces in the studio next door, was hauled in to beef up the vocals. Jagger and Richards approved the song the following evening. For the first time since the days of the throwaway Nanker/Phelge jams, a group original not credited to Jagger/Richards was being considered for release.

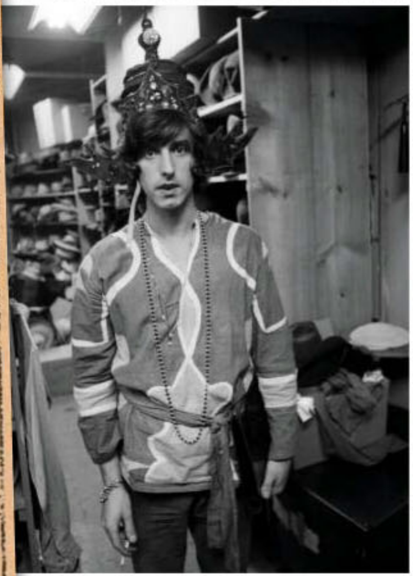
The Lantern was Richards' second attempt to bring some hard-edged riffery to the sessions. On With The Show, which echoed the vaudevillian feel of *Between The Buttons*, could well have been an attempt to make light of Oldham's departure. "I'd never detected much genuine vaudeville in the Stones," observed Keith Altham. "There was always a slight sneer to what they did."

With the real possibility that Jagger and Richards might yet be forced to serve their sentences, Jagger hastily commissioned Peter Whitehead – who'd shot the 1965 documentary Charlie Is My Darling – to film a promotional short for We Love You on Sunday, July 30. Outraged at the original sentencing, which the director believed echoed the late Victorian establishment's persecution of Oscar Wilde, Whitehead proposed a scenario based on Wilde's gross indecency trial of 1895. Marianne Faithfull, in a boyish wig, played Wilde's lover Bosie; Keith Richards the bullying Marquess Of Queensberry.

It was an exquisitely judged move, at least creatively (BBC's Top Of The Pops refused to show it). With his freedom under threat, Jagger revelled in the part of the hounded, unbowed artist. And after his (and Richards') acquittal on July 31, the singer was reborn as the romantic hero striking a blow for freedom. But that was only part of the picture.

Out of jail, and with no producer/manager to answer to, Jagger had stepped up several gears. He said as much to Melody Maker's Chris Welch in August, that while his brush with the law had not left him bitter, all his ideas had changed. ➢





Suits you sir: Bill (at back), Keith and Brian after their raid on the theatrical costumiers; (below right) Brian and (left) photographer Michael Cooper; (bottom) Charlie, Keith and Mick get busy with the DIY psychedelic kit.

The Devil's In The Details

Satanic Majesties' 3D album cover broke new ground. Even if it wasn't *actually* 3D.

Danny Eccleston reports.

AFTER PHOTOGRAPHER Michael Cooper's success shooting the sleeve for The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, he had a problem of sorts: how to follow the most impactful (and expensive) album package to date and please his more regular clients, The Rolling Stones?

"Typical Michael – he wanted to take it a step further," relates Cooper's son and curator, Adam. Hearing of a studio in Mount Vernon, New York with a camera that could take 3D images, he urged the Stones' management to book it for September 13-14, '67, only to find that studio time, flights and hotels were about the only thing Allen Klein was happy to pay for.

"ABCKO SAID IF THE STONES WANTED THIS COVER THEY HAD TO PAY FOR IT THEMSELVES." ADAM COOPER

"The Beatles got the red carpet treatment with their cover," says Adam. "EMI gave them what they wanted. Whereas ABKCO said to the Stones that if they wanted this cover they were going to have to build it themselves. A big difference in attitude."

So the Stones approached the psychedelic set DIY style – getting busy with saws and bottles of glue and dashing into town on a Sunday to raid theatrical costumiers who'd opened specially. Repaying The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper* sleeve shout-out (the WELCOME THE ROLLING STONES sweater worn by the doll, bottom right, belonged to the young Adam), the Stones inserted oval photographs of The Beatles' heads in among the flowers in the foreground.

The camera, running on a semi-circular track, took multiple images – which were combined to produce the lenticular panel by US company Vari-Vue. Cooper had hoped to deliver movement (Jagger's hands are crossed over his chest, then held up; Charlie and Keith look at each other, so do Brian and Bill) *and* 3D before it was explained to him that you could have one or the other. The movement still 'worked' but the clarity of the shift was necessarily compromised.

And hardly anyone acquiring *Their Satanic Majesties Request* got Cooper's ideal cover – with a 12"x12" lenticular – because ABKCO blanched when they saw the cost over a full run.

"There were only about 500 made," says Adam Cooper, "a limited edition that ended up mostly with friends and family. Michael was frustrated, because the work wasn't properly seen."

Michael Cooper had graver disappointments in store. As the promise of the '60s gave way to the reality of the '70s the sensitive and troubled photographer, fighting addiction and dejected by the way the world was turning, took his own life in 1973. His '60s work, full of verve and invention, is his legacy.

Dandelions: the Stones in late '60s finery; (below) Rave mag with Jagger exclusive; the Jones aided Hapshash LP; *Beggars Banquet*, the Stones' next.

He became obsessed with the Stones' survival in a fast-changing, often vindictive world. He floated the idea of a shared record label with The Beatles, set up a new Stones office in Mayfair, and took umbrage when asked whether pop *was* his life. "It's nowhere near all my life," he shot back. A profile of Jagger, written pseudonymously by Altham and published in Rave magazine that November, was headlined, "Mick Jagger: Me, Myself & I".

By the time We Love You came out, on August 18, Jagger was already making light of a song that had been three months in the making. "Just a bit of fun," he said. "You're not meant to think about it." He also kept a cool distance from what he called "this love and flowers scene".

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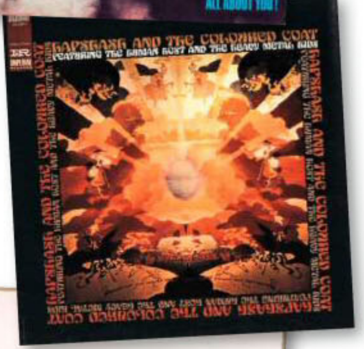
MEANWHILE, SESSIONS continued throughout August and into the first week of September. 2000 Light Years From Home was resurrected, with Jones's eerie mellotron ("saucer sounds", said one studio observer) shining a path for Jagger's jailbird vocal to follow. An entirely new piece, Gomper, started out gently enough then, goaded by Jones's electric dulcimer part, launched into a five-minute freak-out that sounded every bit as ominous and primitive as the infamous Hapshash And The Coloured Coat album (...*Featuring The Human Host And The Heavy Metal Kids*), a cult classic recorded around this time with Jones among the stoner ensemble.


HAPSHASH AND THE COLOURED COAT
FEATURING THE HUMAN HOST AND THE HEAVY METAL KIDS

The last song brought to the sessions was also – leaving aside the most disconnected drum pattern Charlie Watts ever played – the most orthodox. So much so that 2000 Man was briefly considered for a pre-Christmas single before it was decided to concentrate all efforts on selling a difficult but potentially profitable album to a mainstream audience.

Rolling Stones
Beggars Banquet
R.S.V.P.

With that in mind, the Stones had a plan. They would create the trippiest, most psychedelic album sleeve of all, enhanced by the miracle of 3D. Quizzed about the artwork at the time of the LP's release, Jagger still kept that cool distance from the 'love is all you need' vibe. "It's not meant to be a very nice picture at all," he said. "Look at the expressions on our faces. It's a Grimms' fairy tale..."

Having toyed with the idea of calling it Cosmic Christmas, the Stones settled on *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, a mocking adaptation of the wording on British passports that both lampooned and reinforced the group's folk-devil status. Andrew Oldham, who'd positioned the Stones as the anti-Beatles, would've been proud had he not been enduring blasts of ECT treatment for severe depression.

Brian Jones, too, was feeling the strain. Though he'd been freed on bail pending an appeal after being handed a nine-month jail sentence on October 30, the tabloids seized upon his psychiatrist's report, splashing it under the heading, 'The Tormented Mind Of Brian Jones'.

"An extremely frightened young man," Dr Anthony Flood declared to m'learned friends, "anxious, considerably depressed, even suicidal..."

"THERE'S A LOT OF RUBBISH ON SATANIC MAJESTIES. TOO MANY DRUGS, NO PRODUCER TO TELL US, ENOUGH..."
MICK JAGGER

Their Satanic Majesties Request, released simultaneously across the Atlantic – a first for the group – on December 8, 1967, was both the breaking and the making of The Rolling Stones. Initial sales were strong enough to propel the album to Number 2 in the US charts, and 3 in Britain. But it was too far-out and too late. Jagger was right: psychedelia was over.

Interviewed by DJ Tommy Vance for BBC Radio's Top Gear just prior to its release, the three attendant Stones expressed quite different feelings about the record. "This album's gonna knock everybody out!" raved Jones. Charlie Watts deadpanned that it was the group's "most progressive yet". Jagger was more circumspect. "I don't know if it's progressing or not," he countered. "We're just changing that's all."

WHEN THE STONES REGROUPED IN February 1968 for a getting-to-know-you-again session at Redlands, they were changing direction too – the freak-outs and the space rock were off the menu as they contemplated a return to the blues. As Keith Richards said years later, "After *Satanic Majesties*, we wanted to make a Stones album." There were to be no 'see what happens' free-for-alls on *Beggars Banquet*. Yet something of the *Satanic Majesties* spirit never quite left the group. It's there in the samba rhythms and howling voices of Sympathy For The Devil. In the tamboura drones on Street Fighting Man. In the devilish imagery of the spring 1968 Jumpin' Jack Flash promo film. More gravely, it was present at the fateful December 1969 concert at the Altamont Festival, where Jagger's Summer of Love-inspired "If we are all one, let's show we're all one" stage announcement went horribly unheeded.

But there was always something of the Faustian pact about *Satanic Majesties*. It was a risk, one where livelihoods, even lives were put in danger. But for those who got through it, the experience would served them very well. The Rolling Stones that emerged during 1968 and beyond was a band that was built to last.

A couple of years back, Charlie Watts told me in no uncertain terms that he "hated the flower power period. I'd go along in a suit and tie and I'd have to put some dopey flowered shirt on," he said.

But did the work go off the boil too?

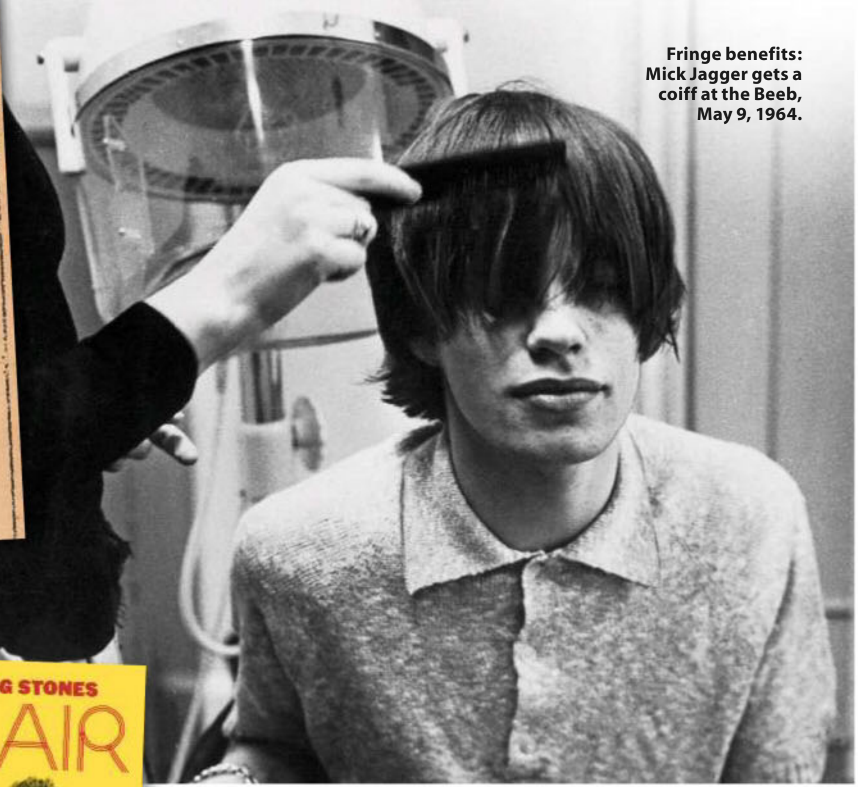
"Nah, I think some very good music came out of that period."

JAGGER! TURN FOR MICK ON THE BEEB, SOUL MUSIC AND MISCHIEF-MAKING...

©Michael Cooper Collection (4), Camera Press

"THEY PUT US ON THE BLACKLIST!"

MICK JAGGER on butting heads with the broadcast establishment. Shining a light: MARK PAYTRESS.



Fringe benefits: Mick Jagger gets a coiff at the Beeb, May 9, 1964.

Alamy

MICK JAGGER IS IN LOS ANGELES and about to spend the afternoon listening to multitracks for the forthcoming, as yet untitled Rolling Stones LP.

THE ROLLING STONES
ON AIR
A BBC recording

"I haven't heard it for a while," he says, probably not since the Stones took off on tour earlier this summer. "I'm gonna pick out the ones I really like, and Keith will be listening to it, too. I'm in the process, but I'm not quite there yet."

That phrase also applies to the Stones' earliest days, an era vividly caught on the new *On Air* set of recordings made for BBC Radio, 1963-65. They wrote begging letters in the hope that the Beeb might notice them. Eventually they did, and the young R&B covers band were soon sharing airtime with Joe Loss and enduring run-ins that heralded greater establishment-baiting times ahead.

***On Air* marks a rare venture into your '60s archive. What took you so long?**

It's something the BBC wanted to do. They probably could have done it anyway but they wanted to do it with everyone's permission and blessing. I'm perfectly happy with it.

Did you like what you heard? Did anything horrify you?

No! I mean, the sound's a lot better. Recording at the BBC was a one-take thing. If you didn't like the vocal or made a few mistakes on the guitar, you couldn't do it again. It was like playing live to no audience.

Definitely an audience on some tracks…

Sometimes there wasn't. I remember being there, 11 in the morning, playing the blues to an empty theatre.

The BBC knocked you back to start with.

Yeah, they turned us down!

Was there comfort in the glory of being misunderstood?

No, we wanted to get on there. Getting on the radio was important, and this was the only station, really. You had to play the game.

Once you were in, do you remember having to explain yourselves?

We'd say, "We're an R&B band and this is what we play. We don't play saccharine pop music like these other bands. We play soulful music."

Were you mischief-makers?

We used to giggle at them. Their attitudes were completely dissimilar to ours. The way they approached recording – getting distortion or a bass drum sound – made us laugh. So old-fashioned! We did a few tracks for Joe Loss, a big bandleader of the '40s and '50s and a great fave of my mum's. Kinda crazy juxtaposition.

But Saturday Club was your most regular date.

Saturday Club was different. Everyone who liked pop listened to that in the mornings while getting ready to go out.

Why not sequence *On Air* chronologically?

I wasn't really involved in that. If it was a regular album, I'd be very involved. But who cares about running orders? People push the button and play it in any order they want.

Your BBC sessions began with a lot of Chuck Berry, but by 1964 into '65, the emphasis was on contemporary US soul. You taped four versions of Solomon Burke's If You Need Me…

We must've liked that one! And Cry To Me. That's another soul tearjerker thing.

Was there a prime mover in the turn to soul?

I don't recall anyone in the band particularly championing that. [But] I found as a vocalist it was challenging to me, much more difficult to sing. If you listen to my vocals, you'd go, "Oh, he tried!" Now I'd do it better. But when you're young you have a go at anything. That's the whole point.

In the cover of Bo Diddley's Cops And Robbers, you eat up all that US slang – the Stones' passion for the US is written all over the set.

Yeah. American music is what we loved. Cops And Robbers, Down The Road Apiece, they were staples of our Richmond club days, blues but sped up. I Just Wanna Make Love To You is five times as fast as Muddy Waters' version.

> "WE'D SAY, WE'RE AN R&B BAND AND THIS IS WHAT WE PLAY. WE DON'T PLAY SACCHARINE POP."

Do you remember being banned in November 1964 having failed to turn up for a show?

We probably said, 'Oh, sod it' after a late night, so they put us on the blacklist for a while. It was a bit like being at school and getting suspended.

Was there a sense every time you walked in of sleeping with the enemy?

Well, in those days, the BBC was super-condescending. [Their attitude was] "Why are we doing this?" Catering to a youth audience but not really wanting to. And, "It's a fad that's not going to be around very long."

By the time you went 'off air' after a September 1965 Saturday Club session that featured (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction, the Stones were no longer a fad but a way of life. Was this a key moment in the Stones' career?

Yeah. A lot happened between the first and last BBC sessions. We'd toured America and had hits but none were as big as that.

With Satisfaction, the Stones became flagwavers not just for R&B but for a generation. The authorities soon came down hard. How do you feel about that now?

The period was very 'us against them'. With organisations like the BBC you did feel that. But by the time we did the last session, it had gone from, "Do we have to play this rubbish?" to, "We're so happy you're coming on the show".

Fans see the recent *Sgt. Pepper* reissue and wonder why the Stones' '60s catalogue hasn't had the same treatment.

For *Exile*, we found tracks that hadn't been released and I wrote lyrics for them and put on new parts. *Sticky Fingers* was remastered with extra tracks. I was super-involved.

Well, take the recent *Satanic Majesties* reissue. Couldn't you sit round a table with ABKCO and find a way to do the Decca-era albums justice?

We don't control that material as much as we do *Exile* and so on. It's a much more difficult process.

Any chance we'll ever hear that Little Boy Blue And The Blue Boys tape or the Radio Luxembourg sessions?

I don't know. I think this'll be good enough for me. Ⓜ

The Stones' On Air album [see review MOJO 290, p103], and a book – The Rolling Stones: On Air In The '60s – are out now.

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The Fall • Singles 1978 - 2016

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"Their music can seem flooded and messy – like someone left the ideas tap on and the plug in."

VICTORIA SEGAL WALLOWS IN TUNE-YARDS. ALBUMS P94

RATINGS & FORMATS

Your guide to the month's best music is now even more definitive with our handy format guide. **CD** COMPACT DISC **DL** DOWNLOAD **ST** STREAMING **LP** VINYL **MC** CASSETTE **DVD** DIGITAL VIDEO DISC **C** IN CINEMAS **BR** BLU-RAY

★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★	★	☆
MOJO CLASSIC	EXCELLENT	GOOD	DISAPPOINTING	BEST AVOIDED	DEPLORABLE

Deep listening

Berlin-based keyboardist forsakes solitude for multiple personnel, reinvention and reverb from the bottom of a well. By **David Sheppard**. Illustration by **Sam Falconer**.

Nils Frahm

★★★★

All Melody

ERASED TAPES. **CD/DL/LP**

KEY TRACKS

- The Whole Universe Wants To Be Touched
- Human Range
- A Place

The 88-key acoustic piano has been kind to Nils Frahm. It's the principal instrument with which the 35-year-old has essayed his six, ever more commercially impactful albums of intimate, non-rock instrumentals. Partly in acknowledgment, in 2015 he launched the annual Piano Day celebration, which falls, naturally enough, on the 88th day of the year, helping confirm his status as poster boy for a slippery musical genre whose various appellations – post-classical, neo-classical et al – are largely erroneous for music, whether purveyed by Frahm or by fellow pianistic travellers like Ólafur Arnalds, Max Richter or Hauschka, that owes as much to the canons of ambient electronica and minimalism as to the conservatoire.

A one-time jobbing recording engineer whose albums have generally been captured literally solo in his Berlin apartment studio, Frahm's roots actually lie equally in a classical training, childhood immersion in his father's ECM jazz albums, and teeth-cutting years in the techno clubs of his native Hamburg. Indeed, an Arthur Russell-like ability to oscillate between acoustic and electronic configurations has latterly become a hallmark. Tellingly, his best-known track, Says, from 2013 multi-location-recorded album *Spaces*, is a dynamically arpeggiating synthesizer piece closer to Vangelis than Erik Satie.

Even as a pianist, Frahm is an innovator. His trademark gossamer sound, established on breakthrough 2011 album *Felt*, was arrived at by swaddling piano hammers in the titular fabric, ostensibly to enable after-hours recording, while 2012's *Screws* was improvised on nine digits, after Frahm broke a thumb. He's been expanding his keyboard vocabulary since 2011's Juno EP, devoted to the eponymous synthesizer, as well as exploring anachronistic pianos like the colossal M370 upright with which he delivered 2015's *Solo*, or, live, summoning tones by caressing the strings of an amplified concert grand with a pair of IKEA toilet brushes. So potent has been Frahm's main signature – surgically-recorded piano mechanics wedded to a poignant melodic aesthetic – that a mimetic sub-genre has developed, with artists such as Dead Light and Halo proffering similarly lyrical sketches on muted, prepared or even broken pianos.

BACK STORY: WELLNESS CENTRE

● The album is bathed in a lustrous reverb, some of which was captured by microphones placed in a Mallorcan well. "My friend Tobias had rented a little apartment on the island," explains Frahm. "I got married in 2015 and went there on honeymoon. When we arrived, I heard this water droplet sound that had an insane, seven-second-long reverb. I opened a door in the living room and behind it was this little well. I was so amazed that I called Tobias, who is a musician too, and we dreamt up the idea of building a studio around the well. I knew it had to be part of the album."

So no wonder the sometimes lavish, occasionally abstruse and often entirely piano-free *All Melody* feels like a thrown-down gauntlet. Two years in the making, it finds Frahm painting from a rainbow palette, its capacious arrangements and forensically detailed production facilitated by Saal 3, his new, bespoke studio in Berlin's Funkhaus, the sprawling, former broadcast headquarters of East German state radio. In his notes, Frahm explains how the set-up enabled an almost holistic approach to recording. *All Melody* certainly offers a synthesis of choice timbres, teased from Frahm's analogue and modular synths, mellotron, harmonium and celeste, as well as beat box and organ, plus further augmentation from trumpeter Richard Koch, string players Viktor Orri Árnason and Anne Müller, percussionist Tatu Rönkkö and the 12-piece Shards Choir.

"VOCAL LAYERS SWIFTLY DISSOLVE, EXPOSING A DIRGE-LIKE CODA THAT MIGHT'VE FALLEN OFF NICO'S *DESERTSHORE*."

The sound of footsteps tripping, seemingly excitedly, across the studio floor, opens proceedings, ushering in the rasping harmonium and choral female descants of startling tone-setter The Whole Universe Wants To Be Touched. No sooner established, its numinous vocal layers swiftly dissolve, exposing a dirge-like coda that might've fallen off Nico's *Desertshore*. That plagal drone is picked up by Sunson, which yields to pulsing electronics, heartbeat percussion and tootling, panpipe-like organ, all filtered through lurching crosscurrents of dub echo – this counter-intuitive rhythmic mesh finally offset by soothing, Arcadian synth lines. A Place unfurls further *terra incognita*, its tremulous synths smeared with viola and more of the choir's imperious ululations bathed in opulent reverb, courtesy of a resonant Mallorcan well (*see Back Story*).

Gauzy piano extemporisations finally get a look in on the succeeding My Friend The Forest. Pitched between Keith Jarrett's *Köln Concert* and the vanilla daubs of new age pianist George Winston, it's one of the few pieces here that would've sat comfortably on an earlier Frahm album.

Striking ingenuity returns on Human Range, with Richard Koch's horn carving melancholy, Jon Hassell-ish arcs across a hazy winter-scape of processed tympani and Frahm's ominous, liminal electronics. Gradually, the inchoate forms condense into a funereal procession, impelled forward by deep bass marimbas and ornamented with pizzicato strings and plangent choral harmony.

Gears change again with the throbbing Tangerine Dream-like title track, and while this and the ensuing, similarly synth-propelled #2 threaten to overstay their trance-indebted welcome (and might have been better sequenced apart), textural relief arrives in the shape of Momentum's hymnal choir meditations, while the initially menacing, John Carpenter-esque synth flurries of Kaleidoscope soon surrender to an onrush of flutey pipe organ arpeggios, joining the dots between Dolly Collins and Philip Glass's *Music In Twelve Parts*. Harm Hymn, a brief, churchy étude for Frahm's harmonium, wraps things up; save for 30 seconds of Funkhaus hum tone, the studio decompressing after all that parameter stretching.

Ultimately, *All Melody* feels like a slight misnomer for such an ambitious and unclassifiable album. While undoubtedly boasting its share of earworm tunes, it's as much a showcase for the sheer plasticity of recorded sound as a vehicle for mellifluous expression. It will be fascinating to hear what the now untrammelled composer conjures up next time he goes to the well.

NILS TALKS! FRAHM ON GENRE-HOPPING, RECORDING WITH "AN ARMY OF FRIENDS" AND THE FUNKHAUS…

FILTER ALBUMS

Nils Frahm: "You can use all the genres you want to."

"I felt I could try to touch the stars."

Nils Frahm speaks to David Sheppard.

Before this album, you'd worked successfully in the same Berlin apartment studio for a decade. What prompted the upgrade?

"I've always tried to use whatever the immediate recording environment is in the best way possible. I moved to Berlin 12 years ago, and I've made so many different things in my little studio. I find too many flaws in my records to really enjoy the music, but I do like the attitude I had in making them. But now that room feels a little empty of inspiration. When I first came to Berlin I heard stories about the Funkhaus and its history. I was always fascinated by it and dreamt of having a studio there. Gradually I got to work there a little bit, either as an engineer or musician, and then I went there for 10 days to record the soundtrack to [Sebastian Schipper's 2015 movie] Victoria. The place was immediately wonderful. When you have a good-sounding room, everything you play feels so glorious, so important! Even playing a simple A minor chord on the piano, you're, like, Wow!"

How did the new studio facilitate your vision for this album?

"The music is definitely inspired by having 200 square metres of space to work in; I had several musicians working alongside one another, which was impossible in my apartment studio. One of the reasons I wanted to make a bigger, more ambitious album was that I knew I could finally attach some of my dreams to it. What I once did with a drum machine I could now do with a percussion player; what I did with a mellotron pad I could now do with a real choir, and so on. I felt I could try to touch the stars."

You've recorded solo for so long, was it liberating to involve so many collaborators?

"I didn't actually set out to make a band record; I really just wanted to get more specific about the exact timbre of the musical elements. Funnily enough, I ended up surrounded by human beings who offered something of their souls, which I think you can hear on the record. It's automatically very different from my previous albums. It's still me, but with an army of my friends."

The album is stylistically broad and not easily categorised. Are those qualities that you deliberately strive for?

"I don't ever set out to make genre-free music – I wouldn't mind making a really great, pure jazz record, for example – but I was always inspired by genre-bending musicians like Arvo Pärt, Miles Davis or Nina Simone, people who have their own sound and wear musical styles as easily as bathrobes. These were the musicians who blew my mind when I was very young. I always thought the most desirable place to be in music is somewhere you can use all the genres you want to, and have people respect you for it. I think I achieved that on this record, and this is what I'm so happy about."

Simone Cecchetti, Alex Schneider

Mudhoney

★★★★

LiE

SUB POP. DL/LP

Seattle godheads live in Europe and in the raw.

Live albums typically offer a very approximate version of the experience they claim to represent, but *LiE* is not destined to join the notorious likes of Thin Lizzy's *Live And Dangerous* or Kiss *Alive* in the authenticity police hall of shame. Erratic tempi, intermittent guitar signals, Mark Arm occasionally singing as if from inside a toilet: Mudhoney's first unlimited edition concert release favours the unvarnished truth, in contrast to the filtered norm of current rock etiquette. Culled from stops in Germany, Scandinavia, Croatia and Slovenia during 2016's month-long transcontinental trek, the 11-song tracklist forgoes perennials such as Touch Me I'm Sick for lesser-spotted nuggets like Fuzzgun '91, a splenetic thrash through Roxy Music's Editions Of You and the heart-sore epic Broken Hands. With a new record due in 2018, *LiE* opens the band's 30th anniversary year in magnificently cruddy style.

Keith Cameron

Django Django

★★★

Marble Skies

BECAUSE MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

Would-be torch carriers of British art-rock bring third album.

Django Django's cut-and-paste approach to songwriting – and indeed genre – is always manifest on *Marble Skies*, making it a rather tricky beast to get a handhold on. If clear ace Champagne conjures Gary Numan meddling with China Crisis's King In A Catholic Style, and Beam Me Up comes on like Depeche Mode fronted by Tears For Fears' Curt Smith, Further sounds like Brian Wilson skirting the edge of a sci-fi soundtrack. As if all of that weren't enough to process, the quirky piano-pop-with-alto-sax winner Sundials turns out to be a co-write with veteran jazz-fusion keyboardist Jan Hammer, while Surface To Air, which features Slow Club's Rebecca Taylor on vocals, begins like Simple Minds' Alive & Kicking, then veers off towards the modern pop dancefloor. An enjoyable if just occasionally patchy miscellany.

James McNair

Jeff Lynne's ELO

★★★

Wembley Or Bust

SONY. CD/CD+DVD/CD+BR/LP

Multi-disc souvenir of June 24, 2017's mega-gig.

During a 2012 MOJO interview, Jeff Lynne suggested the only way he might ever perform ELO songs on-stage again would be a low-key one-off with his friend Richard Tandy. Just five years later, Lynne played to 60,000 at Wembley Stadium. Poignantly, he did so without Tandy, absent through illness, although you'd never realise from these pristine representations of ELO's best-known material (plus a rogue Traveling Wilburys number), meticulously delivered by Lynne's backing band, with Marcus Byrne – one of the 13-strong ensemble's three keyboardists – taking Tandy's role on piano and Mr Blue Sky's vocoder vocals. Every song is gold, but the mixed blessing of Lynne's audio-perfectionism means the album functions essentially as a greatest hits plus bonus chat from Jeff. The visual formats are more rewarding, with behind-the-curtain peeks at this very unassuming genius at work.

Keith Cameron

Neil Young + Promise Of The Real

★★★★

The Visitor

WARNER BROS. CD/DL/LP

"No wall. No hate. No fascist USA."

"I'm living with a game show host/Who has to brag and has to boast," sings 'ol Shakey on Almost Always, classic Young from its harmonica up. We can finally thank The Donald for something, though: a truly-inspired protest album which finds Young's humanity/ire firing some of his best songwriting in yonks. Three LP collaborations in, Promise Of The Real – ie, Willie Nelson's son Lukas et al – prove superb foils for this sludge guitar god/master melody maker, hence the harmony-rich chorus of Already Great sounds exactly that immediately, and the horn-bolstered power-chords of resistance anthem Children Of Destiny are just breathtaking. Young's environmentalist stance is as impassioned as ever on poetic epic Forever, but there's humour here, too. With its talk of Evel Knievel's great-grandfather, Tex-Mex winner Carnival finds Young in playful storyteller mode.

James McNair

Tommy Emmanuel

★★★★

Accomplice One

MASCOT. CD/DL/LP

A guitarist's guitarist meets his admirers.

Ask a bunch of star guitarists to name a player whose skill they envy and "Tommy Emmanuel" will likely spring from their lips. For nearly four decades, the Aussie-born musician has adapted Chet Atkins' highly-articulated "Travis picking" technique to his own style. For this latest work, Emmanuel gathered a wide range of admirers – from Mark Knopfler to Jorma Kaukonen to Ricky Skaggs – for a duets album that easily transcends the format's clichés. Far from a grab-bag of one-offs, *Accomplice One* finds Emmanuel forging deep connections with his collaborators as they cover a dizzying range of styles. Emmanuel and Jerry Douglas turn Purple Haze into an acoustic guitar/dobro showdown, while his picking work with JD Simo and Charlie Cushman on Wheelin' & Dealin' threatens to break a speed record. More impressive than Emmanuel's muscular fingerings are the emotions behind the renderings. Along with Amanda Shires, he turns Madonna's Borderline into a song that will bring tears to your eyes.

Jim Farber

Tommy Emmanuel: many cooks make tasty guitar broth.

Totally wired: N*E*R*D geek out in their hit factory.

Tom Vogel

Live long and prosper

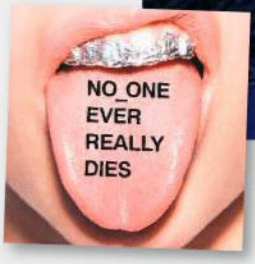
A galaxy of stars align on rap royalty's fifth bold adventure.

By Andy Cowan.

N*E*R*D

★★★

No_One Ever Really Dies



STAR TRAK/INTERSCOPE. **CD/DL/LP**

FEW DOUBT that Pharrell Williams has the Midas touch. Ever since the avid Star Trek fan united with multi-instrumentalist Chad Hugo in the early '90s, The Neptunes morphed into an unprecedented hit factory, spearheading hip-hop's US chart takeover like a mutant Motown via squelching bass, zooming synths and propulsive percussion vamps. Beyond the cold cash boons of forging distinctive blockbusters for Kelis, Jay-Z, Madonna, Britney Spears et al, billionaire fashion icon Williams parlayed his gifts into soundtracks, jewellery, furniture and sundry streetwear brands. Happy? He should be ecstatic.

There is a chink in the gilded armour, however. With the exception of two exemplary production jobs for Clipse, Williams has failed to preside over a gold-standard full-length. N*E*R*D, his experimental three-way affair with Hugo and drummer Shae Haley, has come closest via sporadic dispatches that have explored re-juiced '70s funk, jazz, rock and, on 2010's *Nothing*, whiffy, spliffy whacked-out psychedelia.

The sense this fifth outing is more Neptunes than N*E*R*D is palpable from the credits: Williams largely pulling back from the vocal frontline and sending in the cavalry. It works a treat on its early big-hitters: the seismically bouncy Lemon, showcasing their indefinable knack for building a heady beat chassis (*à la* Ol' Dirty Bastard's Got Your Money) while suiting Rihanna's coolly swaggering, acidic rap to a T; the rhythms are similarly on-point amid the skewed pop of Voilà, although they perhaps missed a chorus trick by not augmenting Gucci Mane's pitched-up cartoonish yelps with Raymond Blanc.

The organic, live-sounding N*E*R*D circa 2001's debut *In Search Of…* resurface on Deep Down Body Thirst and Don't Don't Do It. The first is an addictive booty-shaker whose four-note motif quickly builds into a hot funkin' stomp peppered with strategic "Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!" chants, the latter cleverly melds a super-smooth Labi Siffre-like slow jam with nu-metal guitar breaks before being blown apart by an arresting 30-second Kendrick Lamar visitation.

Much of the remainder genre-hopscotches with hit-and-miss disregard: André 3000's dumb but fun refrains (Rollinem 7s) knocking Future's kinetically blustering Hokey Cokey innuendos (1000) into a cocked Vivienne Westwood Buffalo hat. If the quirky '80s electro riff driving Secret Life Of Tigers rocks the party spot, ESP resembles reheated leftovers from 2004's Snoop Dogg hit Drop It Like It's Hot, while the overlong Lightning Fire Magic Prayer is a self-indulgent cod-mystic R&B-prog fusion yawn-fest. The appeal of Lifting You is more selective still, entirely dependent on listeners' tolerance for Williams and Ed Sheeran meshing their keening falsettos atop a lilting, lovers rock weed hymnal.

Despite the recruitment drive, it's another curious case of history repeating itself: N*E*R*D setting their phasers to stun, but only intermittently finding the target.

Shame

★★★★

Songs Of Praise

DEAD OCEANS. **CD/DL/LP**

Incendiary debut from the Fat White Family-mentored whippersnappers.

South London band Shame fall between Birthday Party, Manics and Bunnymen models: a visceral, frayed, clanging racket but still mindful of tunes. Starting with the album title, you can practically taste the sarcasm dripping off frontman Charlie Steen's acid tongue, though any 2017-is-rubbish overview hinted at in Shame's earlier singles has largely made way for songs (Gold Hole, Concrete, seven-minute finale Angie) that view romance as the site of distrust and violence. Spoken-word serpentine blues The Lick pours scorn on modern consumerism: "Sit in the corner of your room, download the next greatest track… Something that's relatable, not debatable." One Rizla admits, "I'd rather be fucked than sad." There's no escaping Steen's brutal vision, guitarists Eddie Green and Sean Coyle-Smith add Edge-like chimes to Concrete's verses, before the terrace chorus tilts the mood back to belligerent. No Brit-band is better equipped to set 2018 alight.

Martin Aston

Friendship

★★★★

Shock Out Of Season

ORINDAL. **CD/DL/LP**

Philadelphia lo-fi band see magic in the everyday.

SHOCK OUT OF SEASON

For a four-piece band, Friendship sound intimate, small. That's partly to do with their chosen instruments – a weightless mix of pedal steel, synthesizer, Rhodes piano and drum machine – but also because of what frontman Dan Wriggins sings about in his sprained, cracking voice. For their second LP, that's a world of shoe-shopping, trips to the bank, and train journeys to work, banal moments that occasionally lead somewhere profound. Sometimes, the profundity only exists in the glistening music, and despair creeps in: "I was fine this morning/Oh shit, nobody was fine this morning," Wriggins sings on Sure, But. Yet, it's a despair that Wriggins recognises, inhabits and names, a despair where even failure has a purpose: "It's easy to tell you're doing right," he sings on the weaving, dreamlike, Sal, "if it feels like losing." It's an oddly uplifting experience.

Andrew Male

Toto Bona Lokua

★★★

Bondeko

NØ FØRMAT!. **CD/DL/LP**

Second outing from DR Congo-Antilles-Cameroon supergroup.

TOTO BONA LOKUA
BONDEKO

The 14 years since Gerald Toto, Richard Bona and Lokua Kanza released their first – and, until now, only – album have seen seismic upheavals for the music business, yet this belated follow-up to *Toto Bona Lokua* picks up exactly where they left off, as if to suggest that these changes are entirely superficial when all that matters is the music. They kick off as they mean to go on for Ma Mama: high, soft tenors seamlessly blend over the lightest guitar picking (Bona takes charge of most of the playing); there's a mesmeric Swingle-like complexity to Love Train; a Temptations-esque swing on Thitae; and just a touch of African groove on Tann Tanbou A. Ultra sophisticated then – more lush Sunday morning than frantic Saturday night – but an early contender for the hit of the 2018 summer festival season.

David Hutcheon

Spiritualized

★★★

Fucked Up Inside

GLASS RECORDS REDUX. **CD**

Vinyl-only mail-order live album from 1993's Rollercoaster US tour.

With 1993's *Laser Guided Melodies*, Jason Pierce emerged from the acrimony of Spacemen 3 to realise a much-garlanded space-pop masterpiece according to his own meticulous vision. Drained from its creation, his ensuing roadshow vamped things up considerably, adding a sax player for explosive free-jazz work-outs, and Pierce talked excitedly about carrying that spontaneous energy into a more performance-orientated second album. Of course, it never happened that way, as '95's *Pure Phase* then '97's *Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space* each became a magnum opus on an ever grander scale. This low-key live record was the closest he came to documenting that impulse: *LGM*'s blissful moments (I Want You; Angel Sigh) are here progressively subsumed by eruptions of feedback and skronk; side two's spasmic takes on Shine A Light and Smiles recall the deep-space (non-) structure of MC5's *Kick Out The Jams* – not as historic, perhaps, but every bit as full-blooded.

Andrew Perry

All inclusive: "I'm glad we had women in our band," says Stuart Murdoch; (insets) bandmates get a sense of freedom.

Beyond the fringe

Icons of indie return to their roots with three new EPs. By Sophie Harris.

Belle And Sebastian

★★★★

How To Solve Our Human Problems

MATADOR. CD/DL/LP

Belle and Sebastian
How to Solve our Human Problems

"I DIDN'T think that after 20 years I'd be right back in the self-same place," marvels Stuart Murdoch on Sweet Dew Lee, the sumptuous, playful opening track on the first EP of a series of three new discs. If he's mildly baffled, he has every right to be; here he is, nearing 50, a musical icon of sorts, and a dad. Twenty years ago – when the band's first three EPs were released – Murdoch was the spry steward of a funny little band who formed in a Glaswegian cafe, didn't play live, didn't give interviews, and made for most unlikely pop stars.

Confusion, of course, has characterised Belle And Sebastian's music since day one; from the puzzled refrain in Mary Jo ("I don't know what you want") to the existential/domestic crisis on If You're Feeling Sinister ("When she got back her spirituality was thrown into confusion/So she got a special deal on renting from the man at Rediffusion"). Part of their attraction, to any flailing human, was the feeling that they didn't know what the hell they were doing either, and that was not just OK – it was rather lovely.

Indeed, B&S's slicker, later work threw many long-time fans, the comfort of common flaws and soft spots less evident. The joy of these new EPs – released separately, then as a compilation – is they bring together the best of both sides of Belle And Sebastian: the innocence and experience, if you will. While there's befuddlement and wonder, there's also a certain ease and confidence, evident in the title. *How To Solve Our Human Problems* was inspired by Murdoch's deepening interest in Buddhism, notably its emphasis on radical acceptance of reality, frailty, tenderness. In deciding to record these songs without a producer in tiny Glasgow studios, the band opened up to seeing what could happen by just following their intuition.

Accordingly, there is *joi de vivre*, longing and melancholy in spades, matched by swoony pop hooks and shamelessly old-fashioned sounds: bass lines leap, synths shimmer and one can't help but imagine the band on a 1980s Top Of The Pops set, dancing in dry ice and awkwardly kicking balloons. Particular high points include EP1's We Were Beautiful, with its Electric Renaissance-style drum loop and urgent, pacey phrasing; while disco bopper The Girl Doesn't Get It offers euphoric chord changes galore and crisp reflections on political end of empire panic ("We will make this country great again/Just as long as it's white and ugly").

Belle And Sebastian always traded in nostalgia, too, from defunct shops to lost childhoods. Certainly the old-school format choice here reflects a nostalgia of sorts, for a way of listening to and treasuring music. But these sparky songs are the freshest the band has sounded in years. What a revelation.

"We were very headstrong…"

Stuart Murdoch speaks to Sophie Harris.

Did the idea of doing these as self-produced EPs come as a fully formed master plan?

"The message from on high, from the record company was, 'Don't rush' (*laughs*). But our group writes so much that when we're in a period of work, we just wanna get on with it. And I thought, Let's just in an underhand way quietly start recording and compiling tracks."

There are nods back to the early records in terms of the arrangements…

"In a practical sense, if you take a producer out of the equation then you get closer to the band, and the process of us making those records all those years ago. It's quite artless and closer to our early inclinations. It gave us a nice sense of freedom."

How do you relate to the first three EPs and those old photos now?

"The thing that I have the strongest relationship with is the early songs. And that's devoid of the actual recordings of them, because we were learning a trade and we were very headstrong and we made some raggedy sounding records. But when we play live, I still feel that they're relevant to me. With the pictures, I love the delicacy of the early group, the naivety of it. You know, those things that people sometimes cast against us, 'Fucking Belle And Sebastian' and all this. I like that stuff, I'm glad that we had women in our band when it was a *very* laddish atmosphere."

You've been exploring Buddhism recently. How did that happen?

"It really surprised me, being almost 50 and having a substantial foothold in the Christian religion. I was struggling with my health so I went along to meditate and try and get some energy back. But actually I was really surprised with the things they were talking about there, and it really changed me quite fundamentally. If you can't change the circumstance then you can actually change your mind. And I don't mean that in an airy fairy way. You can put up this protection by calming your mind and by getting away from anger and fear and encouraging a mind of patient acceptance. It can be a game-changer."

Bitchin Bajas

★★★

Bajas Fresh

DRAG CITY. CD/DL/LP

Ten plus albums in, the Chicago interstellar trio hit a new groove.

Three years on from 2014's self-titled double album, and a year after their gorgeous meditative collaboration with Will Oldham, Cooper Crain, Dan Quinlivan and Rob Frye return to their ever-evolving template of cellular psychedelia. With cover art referencing Morton Feldman's *Crippled Symmetry*, and a subterranean cover of Sun Ra's Angels And Demons At Play, the Bajas remain up-front about influences, but whereas once the impression was of a craft-fair field collective summoning transcendental sounds from ailing equipment, this is a new full-fat, colour-saturated sound, rippling drones bolstered with percussion, drums, a horn section and half-speed Abbey Road mastering. Occasionally, some old heads might well shout "The Orb are on!", but for the most part, this is soothing, circular psychedelia with added depth, warmth and texture.

Andrew Male

Van William

★★★

Countries

FANTASY. CD/DL/LP

Heartfelt folk rock debut.

It's a tricky time for Californian tunesmith Van William. Now 33, he always thought if his music career failed, he'd work with his dad salmon fishing back in Alaska, a job he's done for half of every year. But his father has just retired and that, plus the end of a relationship, has resulted in these tracks of loss and dislocation. At his best, William mixes elements of Tom Petty, R.E.M. and Tom Verlaine, confessional and anthemic. Before I Found You works as a love song and tribute to another life ("You can save me/From the city/Come and take me to the country…"); Fourth Of July is a defiant, Springsteeny rocker ("I don't believe in anything/I thought I told you, babe"). Midway, the album loses its thread, but recovers with tracks of almost Simon & Garfunkel fragility. Ah, what those salmon missed.

Glyn Brown

Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah

★★★★

The Emancipation Procrastination

ROPEADOPE. CD/DL

Jazz trumpeter's cinematic musical vision.

Arguably second only to Miles Davis when it comes to playing trumpet with a haunting, desolate lyricism, this super-talented 33-year-old New Orleans horn-blower follows 2017's *Ruler Rebel* and *Diaspora* albums with the third and concluding volume of what he describes as his *Millennium Trilogy*. Adjuah acknowledges jazz's traditions but also pushes the idiom's boundaries, which is perhaps why he defies being pigeonholed and prefers to call his unique sound 'stretch music'. Here, his eloquent trumpet is framed by musical backdrops that range from noir-esque alt-rock to ambient soundscapes and jittery hip-hop beats. As an African American living in Trump's polarised US, Adjuah is also not afraid to address political concerns, as the message songs Gerrymandering Game and Unrigging November vividly illustrate. His twin brother, Kyle, writes movie soundtracks in Hollywood and on this evidence, Adjuah should join him.

Charles Waring

Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah: procrastination is good for you.

Various

★★★★

Folk And Honey Presents Sonic Blooms

FOLK AND HONEY. CD/DL

New UK alt-folk and roots music from listings website's new label.

SONIC BLOOMS

Once the product of bucolic settings and getting your head together in the country, the underground alt-folk presented here is very much rooted in the city. Although the acoustic sounds may be largely pastoral, the likes of Robert Chaney, Adam Beattie and MG Boulter tell tales of dark city streets and the darker fears faced on them, while Sisika and Mishaped Pearls blend in subtlety, electronica and techno repetition. From the traditional (Ned Roberts) to the exotic (Brooke Sharkey's Franglaise) and the downright Marmite (Jinnwoo's voice), the diversity within the 20 tracks over these two discs would have had their '60s and '70s forebears' heads spinning. Perhaps most beautiful and promising of all is Ferris & Sylvester's Youth-produced debut single Save Yourself, an overlooked masterpiece of Brit folk that should already have made them household names.

Andy Fyfe

Van Morrison

★★★

Versatile

CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL/LP

After R&B covers album, Van pays homage to the great jazz songbook.

A Foggy Day In London Town, Bye Bye Blackbird, Makin' Whoopee, I Get A Kick Out Of You… This, you imagine, is the sort of thing Van likes to sing in the shower. Or, as Van has it, pay homage to "the music that originally inspired me to sing – jazz!" And why not? Having delivered a hearty job revisiting his favourite R&B on *Roll With The Punches*, Van sounds relaxed and perfectly at ease delving into the golden songbooks of Gershwin, Cole Porter, et al. Classic, timeless songs, alongside surprising choices of a different vintage – Unchained Melody, I Left My Heart In San Francisco – delivered in characteristically lugubrious, late-night manner. There's even a rather charming sax-led instrumental treatment of Skye Boat Song, and the ol' grumpster even sounds suspiciously like he's having fun, swinging through the opening track Broken Record, one of six empathetic originals evoking images of smoky basement bars.

Colin Irwin

FOLK

BY COLIN IRWIN

STICK IN THE WHEEL
FOLLOW THEM TRUE

Stick In The Wheel

★★★★

Follow Them True

FROM HERE. CD/DL/LP

Attitude, imagination and authenticity.

THERE WAS a lurking suspicion on their remarkable debut album *From Here* that Stick In The Wheel were a one-trick pony. This rounded and unexpectedly varied follow-up instantly gives the lie to that. Nicola Kearey's raw urban vocals remain unapologetically in your face (her unaccompanied Unquiet Grave is evidence of that) and they remain confrontationally loyal to their folk song-as-working-class-weapon ethic. Yet Ian Carter's vision both as guitarist and enlightened arranger/producer comes to the fore in bold sonic textures which occasionally explore his background in electronica (going all dreamy on us in As I Roved Out); while their endemic aggression is tempered by moments of exquisite beauty offered by Ellie Wilson's controlled violin. Blending the tradition with their own vigorous material sounds a natural metamorphosis as they've grown and blossomed without sacrificing an ounce of what made them exciting in the first place.

ALSO RELEASED

Christy Moore

★★★

On The Road

SONY. CD/DL

Christy Moore
On The Road

How do you overcome the perennial problem of translating Moore's incredible rapport with audiences onto CD? You make a live album, of course. There have been hashed attempts before, but this 24-track double album containing most of his greatest hits (Ordinary Man, Lisdoonvarna, Nancy Spain, Beeswing et al) works, capturing the unique live atmosphere Moore engenders, while giving the chance to appreciate the importance of Declan Sinnott's intricate guitar accompaniments.

Bob Fox & John Tams

★★★

A Garland For Joey: The War Horse Songbook

FLEDG'LING. CD/DL

A Garland for Joey

The phenomenal success of the National Theatre's staging of Michael Morpurgo's War Horse is the stuff of legend, climaxing with the bloated Steven Spielberg movie (not a patch on the stage show). Original show songmaker Tams recruits excellent songman Bob Fox to strip away the trimmings of the saga, adding new trade and self-written material to place the emotive Joey story into a moving acoustic frame of war, community, loss and remembrance.

Naomi Bedford & Paul Simmonds

★★★★

Songs My Ruiner Gave To Me

DUSTY WILLOW. CD/DL

An album full of such warmth and vulnerability you have to invite it into your parlour. Beguiling English singer Bedford has colourfully explored the full drama of folk and country music narratives on previous albums *Tales From The Weeping Willow* and *A History Of Insolence*, and here adopts a more romantic – but no less potent – approach with former Man They Couldn't Hang Paul Simmonds, whose Ballad Of A Self-Made Man is surely a modern classic.

Bella Hardy

★★★

Hey Sammy

NOE. CD/DL/LP

Things have changed a bit since we last encountered Hardy in 2015, returning from an extended spell in Nashville with a sophisticated bunch of new songs, elaborate arrangements, extensive collaborations and a fulsome Paul Savage production job. "Humanist hymns, ancient Chinese poems, feminist battle cries and reflections on the rise of racism", it sez here, but while Hardy's voice is as sumptuous as ever, some intimacy is lost in the bigger sound and creeping popification. *CI*

Witness to everything: Tune-Yards' Merrill Garbus (right) and Nate Brenner.

Eliot Lee Hazel

Personal politics

Fourth album from exuberant art-pop provocateurs. By Victoria Segal.

Tune-Yards

★★★★

I Can Feel You Creep Into My Private Life

4AD. CD/DL/LP

MERRILL GARBUS feels so strongly about Tune-Yards' new album that she has sent a letter to the press explaining something of its "complicated and personal" background. It's a dangerous game – show don't tell! – especially when it includes sentences like this: "This album is what it is: a vessel for a cisgender, white woman in a heteronormative relationship to explore her place in the world."

It would be easy, then, to roll an eye and say *I Can Feel You Creep Into My Private Life* is more fun than it sounds, but that wouldn't do it justice. In fact, it's as much fun as it needs to be – as it should be. Reflective, restless, fiercely engaged, it feels like it's in a constant process of rethinking and remodelling, slicing off bits of musical flesh and slapping them back on elsewhere as it dips and bounces along the street. Honesty and Colonizer arrive in ruptured glitchy torrents; Heart Attack's grown-up soulful pop is sent on repeated diversions.

None of this is new for Tune-Yards, now "officially" a duo of Garbus and long-term collaborator Nate Brenner. Race, gender and power are always in their tank, but if their music can seem flooded and messy – like someone left the ideas tap on and the plug in – these songs feel tighter without losing range and energy. No small achievement considering Garbus's aims on ABC 123: "I must be a witness to everything."

As a result, these songs often feel like a florid immune response to the world, exposure immediately raising colourful electronic blisters and bumpy, itchy beats. Coast To Coast, a disfigured Life's What You Make It, is caught between environmental and political apocalypse, a very current affair: "The seeds are sown in all the small acts of violence." The Dirty Projectors' lullaby ABC 123 looks out at California burning, namechecks Elizabeth Kolbert's The Sixth Extinction, and ponders buying a generator. (Garbus, happily, can be bitterly funny: "I'm on a desert island and I ate up all the coral/I was so hungry but I know that isn't normal.")

There is a fearlessness here, too, a willingness to risk looking earnest, or clumsy. The queasy Colonizer explores intersectional feminism and white privilege over an unstable, pitching electronic grind: "I turn on my white woman's voice to contextualise acts of my white women friends." There's a similar disturbance on Now As Then ("That's for me/That's also for me") and Home's eerily cloistered Handmaid's chant: "When you're cheering for the winner/The song remains the same."

I Can Feel You Creep Into My Private Life feels like a proper work in progress – one committed to forward motion, tangible change. "We are not what you asked for," sang Garbus on 2009's angry, defiant Real Live Flesh. This time, though, Tune-Yards might be exactly what you need.

Corrosion Of Conformity

★★★★

No Cross No Crown

NUCLEAR BLAST. CD/DL/LP

Reunited with prodigal son frontman, North Carolina veterans find their bite again.

For rock fans of a certain vintage, news of vocalist/guitarist Pepper Keenan's return to Corrosion Of Conformity in 2014 was as welcome as it was unexpected. During his previous shift, from 1990 to 2006, COC had transcended their hardcore punk roots to embrace and in turn shape the hard rock mainstream, with 1994's *Deliverance* a direct influence upon the 'greasy' feel of Metallica's *Load* album. *No Cross No Crown* picks up directly where the Keenan-fronted COC left off with 2005's *In The Arms Of God*, leaning anew on Black Sabbath and Lynyrd Skynyrd for inspiration, and exhibiting a mature, impactful focus. Forgive Me and Wolf Named Crow bristle with menace, while brooding, grizzled set highlight Nothing Left To Say is imbued with pathos and a quiet dignity. A noteworthy comeback.

Paul Brannigan

Dean McPhee

★★★★

Four Stones

HOOD FAIRE. CD/DL/LP

Third full length solo LP from the Yorkshire-based electric guitarist.

Although comprising remastered versions of three previously available tracks alongside two new pieces, *Four Stones* possesses a visionary coherence simultaneously bewitching and recondite. In the past, McPhee's playing has been compared to everything from US guitar soli to the Echoplex instrumentals of John Martyn, but the first seems incorrect while the second too neat. There are certainly the ghosts of folk in here, but also those of Sabbath, Jansch, Derek Bailey, and Ali Farka Touré. Yet, if anything, McPhee's live, fluid Telecaster improvisations bear more similarity to the electric kosmische inventions of Ash Ra Tempel's Manuel Göttsching or Popol Vuh's Daniel Fichelscher. Simultaneously soaring and depthless, soothing and unnerving, solemn and joyful, McPhee's excursions feel weird, unknowable, as if the path we're on is both bright and labyrinthine, a certain route to the unknown.

Andrew Male

They Might Be Giants

★★★

I Like Fun

IDLEWILD. CD/DL/LP

Johns Linnell and Flansburgh size up the current moment and shudder.

It's still early, but TMBG clearly have a contender for the year's best opening-song title in Let's Get This Over With. The track is something of a salute to soldiering on: "Everybody knows how this goes, so let's get over it." Lake Monsters, a quintessentially quirky cut built on fat synths, faux xylophone, and sample-worthy beats, spotlights the trolls who have made soldiering, rather than celebrating, this era's order of business. The assessment: "No hypnosis like a mass hypnosis because a mass hypnosis isn't happening." The set includes some tender spots, but dire wins the day. Thankfully, it's on occasion leavened, as when TMBG note the ridiculousness of assuming societies henceforth will have conquered all evils and ills: "We can't be certain at the moment of this writing, but surely in the future there'll be no barking dogs." Or Lake Monsters.

Chris Nelson

Yes

★★★

Topographic Drama

RHINO. CD/DL/LP

Prog rock diehards revisit their lesser-heard works.

Having toured the 'hits' into the ground, Yes returned to 1980's *Drama* and '73's *Tales From Topographic Oceans* albums for their summer 2016 tour. By then, only guitarist Steve Howe and drummer Alan White remained from the classic '70s line-up. Hired hands Jon Davison and bass guitarist Billy Sherwood (in for Jon Anderson and the late Chris Squire respectively) make all the right noises. But, inevitably, there's a tribute-band feel to some of it. Two of *Topographic Oceans*' four suites are revisited, including the marginally more accessible The Revealing Science Of God. But the whole of *Drama*, Yes's collaboration with The Buggles, gets an airing. Its off-kilter mix of fiddly prog dynamics and shiny new wave pop works, even with Davison under-studying original vocalist Trevor Horn. A handful of crowd-pleasers, including Starship Trooper, round out a set, which, appropriately enough, also comes as a triple-album version.

Mark Blake

Glen Hansard

★★★★

Between Two Shores

ANTI . CD/DL/LP

Third solo album from the Oscar-winning Irishman.

Though reportedly titled for Glen Hansard's love of sailing and the sea, *Between Two Shores* maps the trajectory of a break-up from Why Woman to Time Will Be The Healer via One Of Us Will Lose. Packing soulful brass, choice Hammond and strings, and exquisitely anchored by jazz great Brian Blade (Chick Corea, Joni Mitchell), it's a beautifully recorded and unmistakably classy outing that resonates deeply. Movin' On is an extraordinary conduit of all the passion, hurt and anger of collapse, Hansard's heart-sore, live in the studio vocal sounding magnificently untamed. Setting Forth, by contrast, gains repeat-play stature via discerning subtlety, the fleeting birdsong at its close offering a glimmer of hope. Elsewhere, Your Heart's Not In It touches every raw nerve, but Lucky Man, with its plush, sleepy horns, reaches a point of acceptance and retreat. Heady stuff.

James McNair

La Féline

★★★★

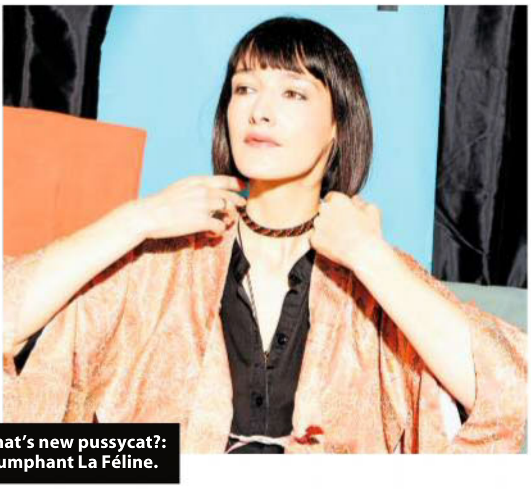
Triomphe

KWAIDAN. CD/DL/LP

Since when did the French become better at pop than anybody else?

A year after being released in France, Agnès Gayraud's second album under the La Féline moniker finally appears on this side of the Channel, a gap that suggests Britain has yet to wake up to the fact that some of the most innovative and progressive pop music is being made away from the English-speaking world – but at least *Triomphe* has made it, joining the likes of Camille and Christine And The Queens. It's not unremarkable to hear hints of, say, Jane Birkin (La Mer Avalée) or Kate Bush (Samsara) in Gayraud's voice, but the dreamy, gothic landscapes inhabited here are entirely her own world, the synthpop of 2014's *Adieu L'Enfance* enjoying a sensual makeover – their creator cites Dionysus, god of ecstasy, as an influence, while herself morphing into the forest-dwelling, wolf-conversing warrior Senga. Fortunately, the music easily lives up to the ambition.

David Hutcheon



What's new pussycat?: triumphant La Féline.

M. Craft

★★★★

Blood Moon Deconstructed

HEAVENLY. CD/DL/LP

Joshua Tree-based Aussie's 2016 song album made over as a filmic daydream.

Using the twinkling desert ambiences that bathed the original *Blood Moon*'s introverted, piano-based songs as its starting point, Martin Craft's redux version finds him eschewing vocals entirely in favour of unabashed cinematic mood painting, with tracks either pared back to minimalist impressions or expanded into fresh, soundtrack-like compositions. Abetted by harpist Mary Lattimore, violinist Paul Cartwright and drummer Seb Rochford, among others, essays like the semi-symphonic Violet Dishevel or Adorn Me, with its distant percussion and spaghetti western guitars inexorably enveloped in waves of luxuriant strings, proffer soaring melody pregnant with final credits-accompanying poignancy. Hazier, less structured offerings like the piano and cello sketch Dim Thing, or the Eno-gone-Americana piano and organ-propelled Shadowy Mad Men, meanwhile, evince a no less persuasive 'incidental music' quality. Only the title seems like a misstep – this is *Blood Moon* deconstructed, yes, but also, crucially, comprehensively reimagined.

David Sheppard

No Age

★★★★

Snares Like A Haircut

DRAG CITY. CD/DL/LP

LA noise-duo's fifth offers blissful breakneck tour of underground history.

Five albums into a career of art-damaged indie-rock, No Age have eased off on the conceptual quirks of yore, and massaged their experimental din into a signature sound that fashions a most endearingly lopsided vision from a gamut of hypnotic looped-feedback vignettes, blasts of synapse-flooding noise and a surfeit of fuzz-toned melody. The result feels like a crash course in the last 40 years of underground pop – albeit imbued with the duo's own ramshackle, DIY personality, and delivered with a level of craft suggesting the end-result of all that fevered experimentation. The highlights arrive thick and fast – the blissed-out Hüsker Dü-meets-Dinosaur buzz of Send Me, the ambient, new-agey soundbath of the title track, the noise-as-hook hurricane of Soft Collar Fad and Tidal's thrilling, overdriven Saints-y ramalama – and of such a standard that *Snares…* feels more like No Age's greatest hits than their fifth album.

Stevie Chick

Xylouris White

★★★★

Mother

BELLA UNION. CD/DL/LP

Intoxicating fusion of traditional-based Greek strings and percussion.

Mother can be taken as a form of psychedelia or as a jazz-tinged augmentation of traditional music. The third album from Cretan lute maestro Giorgos Xylouris and Dirty Three's Jim White (other credits include P.J. Harvey and Courtney Barnett & Kurt Vile's recent *Lotta Sea Lice*) is less punkily animated than its predecessors but just as singular. Throughout, Xylouris's cascading runs and impressionistic shimmer are underpinned by plucked or strummed rhythms and the drone inherent to open tunings. His Greek-language vocals are declamatory, keening. White pushes the momentum by seamlessly blending martial rhythms and angular off-beat patterning. As a heady whole, *Mother* – connoting new life to celebrate Mother Earth – is a cousin of '60s American boundary pushers Kaleidoscope and, especially, George Romanos, whose 1970 album *Two Small Blue Horses* defined a new Greek psychedelia. *Mother* is that good.

Kieron Tyler

SOUNDTRACKS

BY ANDREW MALE

Piero Umiliani

★★★★

Grazie!

NATURE SOUNDS. CD/LP

Double LP (and bonus mix CD) of the groovier output from the Italian composer who gave us Mah Nà Mah Nà.

COMPILED BY UK DJ Marcellus Wallace (aka Dave Silcox) with help from Umiliani's family, and a trip to the late maestro's Sound Workshop, this deep delve into some of the Florentine composer's favourite works (as well as some of his rarest) is the perfect start-point for any new student of library music or Italian film music, hoping to find out what all the fuss is about. Redolent of everything from Lalo Schifrin's late '60s funk-soul grooves to the eerie synth patterns of early '70s Public Information Films, and guitar-trio jazz, with lashings of breathy flute, doomy bass, waka-waka guitar, and lonesome trumpet, *Grazie!* is also perfectly sequenced, taking you from the rhythms of the hectic day, to those of the candle-lit night. Only 1,000 copies have been pressed so snap it up quickly or check out Wallace's Grazie! DJ mix over at SoundCloud.

ALSO RELEASED

Warren Ellis

★★★★

Gauguin

MILAN. CD/DL/LP

Composed for Edouard Deluc's 2017 biopic chronicling the French post-Impressionist's final years in Tahiti, Ellis's score (with occasional assistance from Nick Cave, and the choir of the Catholic parish of Tautira) is one of his finest; Ellis's raw Celtic fiddle an oddly appropriate accompaniment to Gauguin's period of wild exile.

Clint Mansell

★★

Loving Vincent

MILAN. CD/DL/LP

Van Gogh biography, Loving Vincent, is the first animated film where every individual frame was hand-painted on canvas. The finished result is occasionally stunning, occasionally schmaltzy. Similarly, Mansell's score – a theme for each featured painting – feels sudsy and mawkish, a moonstruck musical mood-board for works that already sing.

Max Richter

★★★★

Taboo

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON. CD/DL/LP

Not to diminish DG's simultaneously released Richter scores for Black Mirror and Henry May Long, but the German-born British composer's soundtrack for Tom Hardy's nightmare Dickensian drama is something else; a dark and destabilising mix of haunted waltzes, menacing Ligeti drones, angelic choirs and minimalist orchestral laments.

Henry Mancini

★★★★

Mommie Dearest

REAL GONE MUSIC. LP

Henry Mancini worked on some proper stinkers in his final decade. Condorman? Ghost Dad? Santa Claus: The Movie? Perhaps no flop is more legendary than hysterical Joan Crawford biopic Mommie Dearest… and no Mancini score more beautiful; an orchestral evocation of the golden age of Hollywood, spellbound between romance and despair. *AM*

Vincent Ferrané

FILTER ALBUMS

Undiminished party vibe: The Go! Team, kitchen sink not shown.

Bahamas

★★★★

Earthtones

BRUSHFIRE/ISLAND. CD/DL/LP

Magnetic fourth outing from Canadian alt-rocker.

Bahamas is actually Finnish-Canadian Afie Jurvanen, from the working-class town of Barrie, Ontario. That the alias takes you from the snow belt to balmy coral reefs is no accident; Jurvanen has worked to get from his background – depression, "my jerk dad", struggling with relationships – to a place of laid-back *joie de vivre*, and it shows in every spare, self-aware track. Backed by D'Angelo's rhythm section, Jurvanen's vocal reaches from gruff Tom Waits irony through Curtis Mayfield intimacy to a killer falsetto; melodies are funky, soulful, achingly gorgeous. Alone works off a pacy, staccato guitar riff to look at the longing for connection; Opening Act has a vocodered, Prince-style frankness ("Why you runnin' from me like I was danger?/Is my music not good enough?"); No Expectations is dark with meaning, and you want to know more. Cool, humorous, tender, this is a delicious thing.

Glyn Brown

Dan Michaelson

★★★★

First Light

THE STATE51 CONSPIRACY. CD/DL/LP

Timeless English melancholia from a low-key national treasure.

A beguiling voice, Dan Michaelson has long carved his own niche first with Absentee and then backed by The Coastguards, culminating in a prolifically-delivered trilogy. Fully solo now, *First Light* is a mini-masterpiece built on sparse and sparing orchestral tones by arranger Arnulf Lindner AKA Skeleton Key. Though the parched and intimate vocal inflections of Someone Else's Dream and Old Kisses might recall Leonard Cohen and Bill Callahan, Michaelson is his own man, his maturing voice creaking like old leather and cracking beneath the weight of these daybreak confessions. The delicate strings offer nuance as autumnal and evocative as the best of Nick Drake, with his recent soundtrack work (a highlight on TV show The Detectorists) clearly having honed and heightened his ability to draw dramatic tension. Restraint is key here, and Michaelson's very English version of Americana is a career pinnacle.

Ben Myers

Hamilton
Mausoleum Suite
FRANCIS MACDONALD
featuring soloists from
THE SCOTTISH FESTIVAL
ORCHESTRA

Francis Macdonald Feat. Soloists From The Scottish Festival Orchestra

★★★★

Hamilton Mausoleum Suite

TR7/SHOESHINE. CD/DL/LP

More transporting chamber music from Teenage Fanclub's drummer.

It's a lovely conceit: compose music inspired by the architecture and history of the 1850s-built mausoleum that stands at the edge of Strathclyde Park in Lanarkshire, then record it there in a day. With its unique acoustics, the empty space – which stands 37 metres tall and has one of the longest reverb tails of any building in the world – almost ghost-produces here, adding girth and gravitas to John Davidson's cello, and a liquid quality to each pluck of Sharron Griffiths' harp. If the sad and stately Cantata For No Voices seems to nod at the building's long obsolescence, Stone Lions Lullaby soothes the ancient, plinthed beast that stands guard outside, and Half Past Midnight opens with a gorgeous little harp motif. There's a stirring, solemn beauty to *Hamilton Mausoleum Suite*, another classical work cementing Macdonald's antidote-to-all-drummer-jokes status.

James McNair

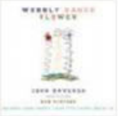
John Daversa

★★★★

Wobbly Dance Flower

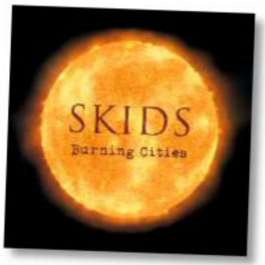
BFM JAZZ. CD/DL

A jazz fun run of outstanding quality.



Trumpet star and arranger John Daversa earned a Grammy nomination with his previous project, a reimagining of Beatles music in a big band setting. This time around he's heading a sextet and the results are even more satisfying. The opening Ms. Turkey sets the scene as Daversa and his frontline cohort Bob Mintzer (tenor sax, bass clarinet, EWI) deliver a sparky, humour-filled, speed-bop composition that's guaranteed to leave listeners open-mouthed. And the quality is maintained thoughout the other seven originals and lone borrowed standard (Bird's Donna Lee). Jazz Heads swings easy, You Got A Puppy? and Meet Me At The Airport both excite and amuse, while the beautifully structured Brooklyn Still demonstrates that even in slo-mo, Daversa's music keeps you hangin' on.

Fred Dellar



Skids

★★★

Burning Cities

NO BAD. CD/DL/LP

Fife post-punk legends' first album since 1982.

Richard Jobson knows very well the hazards of putting the Skids name to new music made without Stuart Adamson, the band's late guitar genius and founder. So for *Burning Cities* to be enraged and sharp is testimony to the commitment of all concerned: original bassist Bill Simpson and '79-81 drummer Mike Baillie combine with Big Country's family guitar firm Bruce and Jamie Watson to summon the centrifugal melody onslaughts of the band's classic era. Jobson drives the project beyond nostalgia, however, the singer's despair at the world burnished by producer Youth to make the frenzied Kaputt feel very much of-the-now (and oddly suggestive of Arcade Fire). With some lyrics on the utilitarian side of blunt, it lacks the younger Jobson's poetic delusions, but an elegiac title track, shimmering Refugee and Kings Of The New World Order's halcyon riffola are all powerful statements worthy of the Skids legend.

Keith Cameron

The She's

★★★★

"all female rock and roll quartet"

EMPTY CELLAR. CD/DL/LP

Eccentric second album from San Fran dudes.

"all female rock and roll quartet"

A wall's being demolished next door as I review this, and this is louder. Not raucous, but the option's there. In fact, it's way more tuneful than the band's raw debut, solid with punky, rocky hooks and melodic savoire-faire. Mates since they met in the playground, still barely out of their teens, these deeply studious women deliver fuzzed-out, reverb-drenched '50s and '60s jangle churned into West Coast garage rippers. Death Dreams sounds like Ash and as pissed-off as Liz Phair; Heartache has the atonal cool of Elastica, with Ronettes-style keys, castanets and lonesome vocals; Be Alright, with its blistering guitar, is mood-busting stuff – "You never kiss me right!" There's tender yearning with angelic harmonies, and shrugging irony: "I can't tell you how sorry I am/That I let myself get so out of line." Honest, snarky.

Glyn Brown

The Go! Team

★★★

Semicircle

MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES. CD/DL/LP

Uplifting funk from Brighton's groovecentric indie poppers.

Driven by visionary multi-instrumentalist Ian Parton, The Go! Team have long garnished their harmonious indie pop with Technicolor slices of electro, hip-hop and funk. On their fifth studio album, Parton taps into his sonic influences by travelling to the home of Motown to link with the Detroit Youth Choir, among others. The results are a hooky batch of soulful, swaggering cuts that brim with ragged choral harmonies and brass, plus the occasional ripple of steel drums. For the most part his kitchen sink M.O. works, as on the Day-Glo hooks of The Answer's No – Now What's The Question?, and If There's One Thing You Should Know. The instrumental smorgasbord can feel a little claustrophobic, as on the clattering All The Way Live, but overall The Go! Team's relentless party vibe emerges undiminished.

Matt Allen

SEMICIRCLE
THE GO! TEAM

Annick Wolfers

Alan Tyler

★★★

El Tapado

HANKY PANKY. **CD/DL/LP**

'Electronicana' from the chief Rockingbird.

Since fronting pioneering UK country-rockers The Rockingbirds in the early '90s, Alan Tyler has stuck by the Americana sound, across subsequent band aliases and noughties' 'Birds reunions. Until now, that is, when recording with the fabled Teenage Engineering OP-1 programmable synth has widened his remit to encompass singer-songwriter. Rockingbird sidekicks Sean Read (production, percussion, brass) and Patrick Ralla (acoustic guitar) are woven into – very understated – digital scenes, with Tyler's handsome baritone reinforcing the human touch. Lyrically, he's quite the sentimentalist. Sunburnt ballad Going Back To Mexico's road trip narrative starts, "Dad paid for the train/Next stop is Dunblane." More prosaically, Tyler croons, "How d'you get that smile?" in Lucky Lonesome (a song tailor-made for Glen Campbell), while My Heart Was Always Wrong suggests country music still matters to Tyler, even if the song's lush tropicana suggests otherwise.

Martin Aston

Alien Stadium

★★★★

Livin' In Elizabethan Times

DOUBLESIX/DOMINO. **CD/DL/LP**

Steve Mason and Primal Scream's Martin Duffy in cosmic concept caper.

This illustrious Brit-indie duality here respond to today's ghastly political climate by indulging a ludicrous, if oddly plausible pop fantasy: across four movements, they flee into outer space for help, only to find that the boss up there is "a simple drunken man from Mars" called Ang-gog-nu, whose crazed militarisation exceeds even our own. Disgusted by Earth, the alien leader duly aims all his firepower on it, with cataclysmic consequences. Mason, whose singer-songwriterly blossoming since 2010 has been a marvel, clearly relishes revisiting a more madcap and genre-busting format; indeed, opener This One's For The Humans reignites early Beta Band's acoustic-thrummin' mischief. For Duffy, a world-class ivory-tinkler, it's an equally characteristic maverick turn, the closing end-of-things party tune Titanic Dance recalling the piano-house pulse of both Don't Fight It, Feel It, and his preceding combo, Airstream. All told: a mighty uplifting wheeze.

Andrew Perry

First Aid Kit

★★★★

Ruins

COLUMBIA. **CD/DL/LP**

Stockholm sisters tear open their hearts on mature fourth album.

There's a YouTube clip doing the rounds of a 12-year-old playing amazingly accomplished blues guitar. It's difficult to watch, mind, and not think: do you understand this, or are you just joining the dots? Can a 12-year-old child *feel* the blues? Let's hope not. There's always been a rootsy truth to First Aid Kit's indie folk twang, but they were so young – the youngest of the Soderberg sisters, Klara, was 14 when they started out – it was sometimes difficult to know what was studied imitation and what was felt. Album four rarely poses this quandary. There's been Klara's truncated engagement. Friction between sisters glued to each other on tour. There is pain here – "I lost you, didn't I?" sings Klara on the title track, "but first I think I lost myself." The results, though, are delicious.

James McMahon

First Aid Kit: delicious pain in the *Ruins*.

Porches

★★★

The House

DOMINO. **CD/DL/LP**

Upstate New Yorker's addictively downbeat electronica.

Aaron Main clearly likes water. Following sky-gazing debut, 2013's *Slow Dance In The Cosmos*, he started diving on 2016's *Pool* album and mini follow-up *Water*, and again here, starting with Now The Water and Swimmer, respectively capturing the dual aspect of his sound – semi-upbeat synth-pop and woozy ballads. One constant is Main's detached, doleful monotone: he's definitely drowning, not waving. In Country, another piece of ambient driftwood, Main sings, "Watch the water drip from my mouth to yours… Break the water with your arms." W Longing's Auto-Tune vocals ("This cold pool/Glowing against the night/Is the only thing/I believe is right") render it even more 'sad robot'. But before long, these initially detached settings establish a magnetic, narcotic allure, filled with elliptical hooks and images, a Donnie Darko-style universe of suburban strangeness. Whether in the titular house or in the water, nothing feels like home.

Martin Aston

Starcrawler

★★★

Starcrawler

ROUGH TRADE. **CD/DL/LP**

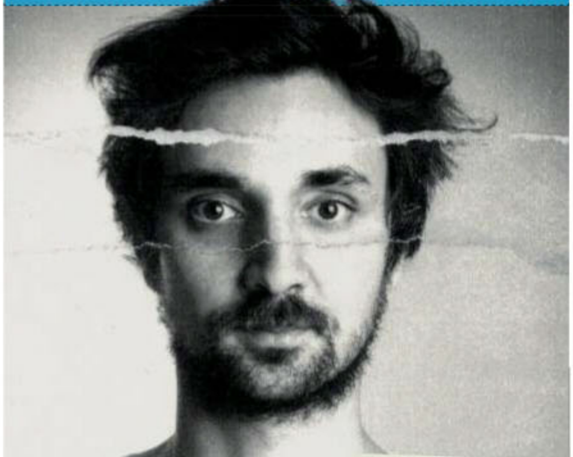
Bona-fide LA teen glam-trash reborn!

On paper, Starcrawler are too good to be true: four skinny late-teenage Angelenos, who, like their buddies The Lemon Twigs, inject fresh alt-energy into the rock their folks taught 'em – singer Arrow de Wilde's mum is music photographer Autumn. Early attention has centred on Arrow's goofily theatrical stage hijinks involving hospital gowns and fake blood – all a bit yelpy and 'notice me!' Though L-plates are still to the fore, this 28-minute debut shows a promising diversity of ideas, tempo, and riffs (from Henri Cash, 16), easily surpassing ultra-basic punker-debut 45, Ants (which isn't included). Second up, Love's Gone Again irresistibly imagines early Banshees with Debbie Harry singing, while ensuing hometown hymn I Love LA has both a bittersweet pre-departure tinge, and a rockin' tune. Further on, delights range from Pussy Tower's saucy glam-stomp, to Tears' forlornly flanged, Angie-esque weepie. So: star potential, worth Crawlin' on with.

Andrew Perry

ELECTRONICA

BY STEPHEN WORTHY



Amandra

★★★★

Dame De Bahia

OBSCURA. **DL/LP**

Serene, intimate, widescreen techno.

FRENCH PRODUCER Amandra moved to Warsaw, he says, for love. You can't help thinking that a by-product of this romantic gesture was ample time to develop his music. *Dame De Bahia* is underpinned by steady, resonant drone and coupled to bright, sprawling melodies, turning tracks into contemplative electronic hymns. Its gossamer-light minimal soundscapes appear to float off into the blue yonder. Gavaudan, its abstract, experimental ambient pinned to live swing percussion, melts slowly, like early spring frost. At other times, every space appears filled, but subtleties of texture mean they never feel bloated or overwrought. Matisa Anse has industrial techno intensity, but in Amandra's hands it becomes softer, more pliant, its 150bpm tempo augmented by muffled throbs, like a distant sheet metal press blending with an ECG. A panoramic, complex and, indeed, passionate record.

ALSO RELEASED

Keinemusik

★★★

You Are Safe

KEINEMUSIK. **CD/DL/LP**

The house music made by the Berlin-based trio of Adam Port, &Me and Rampa as Keinemusik feels deliberately programmed to guide you into a state of heightened ardour. Its lingering chords are full of emotion, echo is deployed like a WMD, and an air of nocturnal seductiveness hangs heavy over proceedings.

Simon Haydo

★★★★

The Illusion Of An Alternative Choice

PEDER MANNERFELT PRODUKTION. **DL/LP**

The Korg MS-20 is an electronic music hero, a monophonic analogue synth that shaped the sound of early '80s Brit pioneers, such as Depeche Mode and Fad Gadget. The sole tool of Sweden's Simon Haydo on this voyage into warped noisescapes and angular abstract beats, it's deployed with compelling and often terrifying intensity.

Various

★★★★

Diggin' In The Carts

HYPERDUB. **DL/LP**

Raw, simplistic and cartoonish it can be, but the influence of 'chiptune' music composed for Japanese video games of the late '80s and early '90s cannot be underestimated. Within this collection of pithy two-minute lo-fi soundtracks lies the DNA of grime's gritty, skeletal rhythms, house experimentalists like Leon Vynehall and fluttering electro sojourns of Dan Deacon.

PBR Streetgang

★★★

Late Night Party Line

SKINT. **CD/DL/LP**

It may have taken nigh on a decade to unleash their debut LP, but Leeds' PBR Streetgang hardly lack ambition. There are shades of cross-Pennine counterparts Crazy P in their methodology – coruscating, disco-laced house. Sharp-elbowed electro jams and even a foray into spiky LCD-style punk funk on Everything Changes are proof of PBR's diverse playbook. *SW*

FILTER ALBUMS

Thanks for listening as Chris Thile puts down his mandolin.

Brantley Gutierrez

Calexico

★★★★

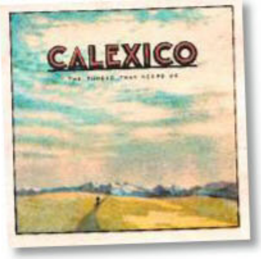
The Thread That Keeps Us

CITY SLANG. CD/DL/LP

The Arizonans go Big Pink at "the Phantom Ship".

The world is going to hell, your state voted Trump… but you look in your daughter's eyes and something clicks. For their ninth album, Joey Burns et al shifted HQ to northern California and a house built from salvage, where they could survey the peace of the ocean on one side and the turbulence of the US on the other. The results reflect this dichotomy: End Of The World With You swaps the apocalypse for anthemic, U2-like sky-scraping; Flores Y Tamales underlines the debt North America has to Spanish speakers; Voices In The Field is underpinned by a North African groove; Dead In The Water would not be out of place on a Mary Chain album. If the band have upped the musical chaos, there's still an unashamedly romantic feel, as if they believe humanity's innate goodness will get us out of this mess.

David Hutcheon



THANKS for LISTENING
CHRIS THILE

Chris Thile

★★★

Thanks For Listening

NONESUCH. CD/DL/LP

The Django Reinhardt of the mandolin revamps his TV originals.

Best known as a member of Nickel Creek and The Punch Brothers, Thile hosted the A Prairie Home Companion radio show for 2016, creating a new song every week with the house band and an elite line in guests. Here, he's revamped 10 of those compositions, playing most of the stringed instruments himself, with Andrew Bird's bassist Alan Hampton and drummer Ted Poor, plus Nadia Sirota, who contributes viola to the title track. But it's not an instrumental album – only one song, Balboa, exhibits Thile's solo mandolin magic. Elsewhere, banks of overdubs and multitrack vocals feature Sarah Jarosz, Gaby Moreno and Aoife O'Donovan, helping to create swirling harmonies on tracks like Modern Friendship, a celebration of old pals remembered. Thile's creations rarely boast a sing-along factor, but deliver in terms of sheer musicality.

Fred Dellar

Gill Landry

★★★★

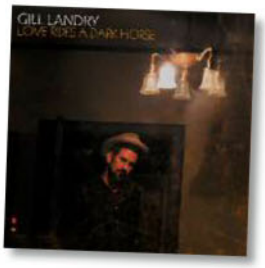
Love Rides A Dark Horse

LOOSE. CD/DL/LP

Third solo album from former Old Crow Medicine Show frontman.

With a title like that, Gill Landry's third album is hardly going to be a chuckle fest. Written in his darkest days after quitting his band and being abandoned by his fiancée – in Landry's own words, "The future was looking like an exhaustingly long walk through a knee-deep tunnel of shit ending in death" – his broken heart bleeds over everything. From the regretful prison of Bird In A Cage to the quiet rage of The Only Game In Town, he tilts towards the pure country end of the 'roots' spectrum rather than the hybrid he left behind with Old Crow Medicine Show, and although he's written sad love songs before, it's never been from his own perspective quite like this. Having finally been forced to wallow in what he wrote about in others, Landry has emerged a better, deeper and more honest songwriter.

Andy Fyfe



Lucas Oswald

★★★

Whet

COSMIC DREAMER. CD/DL/LP

Missouri multi-tasker battles his demons to make belated first statement.

Oswald's depression, which has nullified his 'whet' ("a thing that stimulates appetite or desire") has seen him serve other frontmen, notably in Shearwater. Here, his disadvantage is upended, as depression underpins his own record, which eschews any anticipated angst-heavy, downbeat template for lush reverby pop. Oswald's credits include guitar, piano, vibes, dulcimer, cello and tape loops, while revealing lovely, breathy vox – Pernice Brothers fans should lap up his dreamy, quasi-psychedelic emoting. Not that Oswald's hiding behind the music instead, as the words reveal all: feeling "exhausted, trapped, and broke" in A Long Long Year; weight loss and sleeplessness in Starving; his sideman status in Passenger, *Whet*'s most direct hit, glimmering wistfully in Elliott Smith fashion, as guest singer Rae Fitzgerald asks, not unreasonably, "Do you have to be so nervous? You've got nothing to hide."

Martin Aston

Lean Year

★★★★

Lean Year

WESTERN VINYL. CD/DL/LP

Richmond, Virginia duo's spectral debut.

The singer-songwriter in slo-core cult Spokane for six LPs, Rick Alverson returns from a 10-year diversion into film-making, alongside debutante singer (and girlfriend) Emilie Rex on a set of aching torch songs. To separate the duo from slo-core and alt-folk peers, their lead instruments are violin and woodwind, applied with the texture of watercolour. In line with Alverson's screenplays, Rex dwells on communication breakdown, but there is filmic detail too: Sonja Henie is named after the tragic (she died in a plane crash) ice-skater/movie star, while in album peak Waterloo Suns, Rex struggles to recall the lovers' favourite Kinks song as Alverson's guitar, making a rare appearance, cuts a swathe through her anxiety. Rather than exorcise the blues, Rex's weary ardour often sounds like she's paralysed, fearful of feeling. A quietly devastating record.

Martin Aston

Nick Power

★★★★

Caravan

SKELETON KEY. CD/DL

The Coral keyboardist's debut, accompanying a third book of outsider poetry.

CARAVAN
NICK POWER

Nick Power's writings map his *fernweh* in their rhythm and metre. As does this, his first solo album. These intimate skeletal folk songs about yearning and travelling the burning land were recorded alone in the early hours, in a caravan in a field in North Wales. Springsteen's *Nebraska* and Willie Nelson's *Demo Sessions* are the touchstones. But Power has his own voice, one that is emotional, touching and dignified. Played on just acoustic guitar and cheap Casio keyboard, with a bit of blues-harp wailing and gentle rhythms provided by saucepans played with a wooden spoon and chopsticks, there's a delicious mystery and romance that culminates in a cover of Clint Eastwood's I Talk To The Trees, which in Power's hands cuts straight to his fragile, tender core.

Lois Wilson

Nona Hendryx & Gary Lucas

★★★★

The World Of Captain Beefheart

KFR. CD

Ex-Beefheart guitarist and Labelle singer do some serious reimagining.

The World of Captain Beefheart

The Gary Lucas part is easy – he was, after all, a guitarist in Beefheart's band. But what of Nona Hendryx of Labelle fame? Her presence makes sense if you've followed her solo years, during which she's consistently challenged herself and crossed genres with relish. What the pair have done with these dozen Don Van Vliet tunes is a rather beautiful, remarkable thing. Lucas's skronky guitar is often the connector but it's the little surprises that give the collaboration its richness: the straight-up soul-ballad cover of *Safe As Milk*'s I'm Glad doesn't mess much with Beefheart's '67 original but it's a custom fit for the smooth side of Hendryx's vocal universe. Guitar fans need not fear though: Lucas's nasty overhaul of *Shiny Beast*'s Suction Prints and the twisted time signatures he and Hendryx navigate on When It Blows Its Stacks are exhausting.

Jeff Tamarkin

Arcelia

★★★

Building On The Land

HOW NOW. CD/DL

Harmony folk-pop trio from darkest Kent with a very British strain of mature, autumnal reflection (see Paul Heaton, Kirsty MacColl), especially bittersweet when sung by Teresa Gallagher. *JB*

A Grave With No Name

★★★

Passover

FORGED ARTIFACTS. CD/DL/LP

Nervy, fragile set from London songwriter Alexander Shields inspired by the melancholy of a gathering after a death in a family. Mortal grief surveyed via delicate instrumentation, sung in Shields' papery voice. *JB*

Atamina

★★★★

Sycophantic Friends

MAKKUM. CD/DL

Like his mentor, King Ayisoba, Atamina is part of North East Ghana's Kologo Power scene, but has a more stripped-down DIY attack: intense, hypnotic riffs on his two-string lute and satirical lyrical rants against the local bourgeoisie. *AM*

Peter Matthew Bauer

★★★★

Mount Qaf (Divine Love)

FORTUNE TELLERS MUSIC. DL/LP

The Walkman bassist's second is, he says, more personal than spiritual. Warm and full of feeling, an LP as instinctively cosmic as it is epic. *JB*

Ghost Music

★★★

I Was Hoping You'd Pass By Here

ARLEN. CD/DL/LP

Tremulous indie nostalgia by songwriting duo Matt Randall and Lee Hall (of '90s Essex band Beatglider). Ragged, '80s Brit classicism with soft echoes of wraith-like Americans Galaxie 500 or Yo La Tengo. *JB*

Hans Chew

★★★★

Open Sea

AT THE HELM. CD/DL/LP

NY via Tennessee country-blues rocker shines broad rays of psych-folk warmth onto his fourth album. A set of extended tracks ply circular Fairport-ish grooves to ragged country vocal. Highlights: Cruikshanks/Freely. *CP*

Jaguwar

★★★

Ringthing

TAPETE. CD/DL/LP

Carving melodies from layers of chest-compressing loudness with the aplomb of their '90s forbears (MBV et al), Berlin trio Jaguwar don't reinvent the wheel, but their propulsive guitar rock intricacies bring all the right deep-sonic thrills. *JB*

Nicholas Krgovich

★★★

In An Open Field

TIN ANGEL. CD/DL

The Canadian singer wrote a song a day, then recorded the album live, juxtaposing lyrical ennui with optimistic charts. Cloying, ultimately fascinating; a composer's doubt cast in bright musical armour. *AM*

Mica Levi

★★★★

Delete Beach

DDS. DL/LP

Levi's electronic score for Turner Prize nominee Phil Collins' animé drama (illustrated and designed by Marisuke Eguchi) mixes synth-string dissonance to trippy sizzurp'd beats, for a future world where euphoria and paranoia meet. *AM*

The Lost Brothers

★★★★

Half Way Towards A Healing

BIRD DOG. CD/DL/LP

Oisin Leech and Mark McCausland are harmonising Irishmen who meander into sun-baked Calexico terrain on their fifth LP's title track, but are most at home in melancholy autumnal folk-lands. *JB*

Wadada Leo Smith

★★★★

Solo: Reflections And Meditations On Monk

TUM. CD/DL

Mississippi avant-garde trumpeter's unaccompanied interpretations of Thelonious Monk's solo compositions. Soulful, questioning, and the perfect introduction to Smith's unique, illuminative jazz. *AM*

Various

★★★

Pop Ambient 2018

KOMPAKT. CD/DL/LP

As each year ends, Cologne label Kompakt hand out aural Tiger Balm in the shape of their annual Pop Ambient compilation. Within resides a languid collision of elegant drone, ghostly country and glacial techno. *SW*

Various

We Out Here

BROWNSWOOD. CD/DL/LP

Gilles Peterson's label presents UK artists revivifying jazz in the urban now. Shabaka Hutchings and George Crowley's clarinets duel on lyrical Black Skin, Black Masks; tubist Theon Cross huffs hot and heavy; Binker & Moses' Moses Boyd offers avant-funk. All play on each other's tunes. *DE*

The Xcerts

★★

Hold On To Your Heart

RAYGUN. CD/DL/LP

Inspired by romantic hope's inextinguishable spark in the teen angst of John Hughes's '80s movies, this Brighton trio proclaim their pop-rock thrills with juvenile garrulousness and hooks aplenty. Catchy, undemanding, irksome. *CP*

NOWSTREAMING

The Staves The Way Is Read

After Justin Vernon produced their 2015 album, *If I Was*, The Staves must have felt they owed him a favour so they've repeatedly played the Eaux Claires Festival he curates. Their creative relationship with the Bon Iver leader keeps on giving as, following a supposedly one-off live collaboration with ensemble yMusic for this year's event, the Herts sisters record an LP with the New York-based classical group. Marrying the sextet's instrumentals with The Staves' vocals and lyrics, *The Way Is Read* is an urgent mix of baroque strings and enveloping harmonies that meshes into something greater than the sum of its parts. Whole album now streaming; physical release follows before 2017 is out. *PS*

Find it: Various streaming services

Whenyoung

Actor

Soaring yet quizzical vocals mixed with urgent, sky-bursting indie, the Limerick newcomers make a sharp impact with their new 7-inch. *PS*

Find it: SoundCloud

UNKLE

A Night's Interlude EP. 1 (The Road Reconstructed)

Four self-remixes from James Lavelle's collective. *PS*

Find it: Various streaming services

Graham Tolbert

Recommended Retailers

Here's the exclusive monthly guide to the country's most mouthwatering independent record emporia. Chosen for their knowledge of both current releases and specialist areas, they're guaranteed to provide the personal touch you won't find elsewhere. And they stock MOJO too. All where you see this sign.

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upon Tyne, NE1 5BP
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"HEAD are pleased to announce the opening of our new store in Galway. We stock all new releases, limited editions & everything you need on Vinyl, CD, DVD & Blu Ray. We also have a full range of Headphones & Turntables. We are located downstairs in Corbett Court. Be sure to pay us a visit or get in touch, thanks Daragh - Manager". galway@wearehead.ie www.facebook.com/headgalway

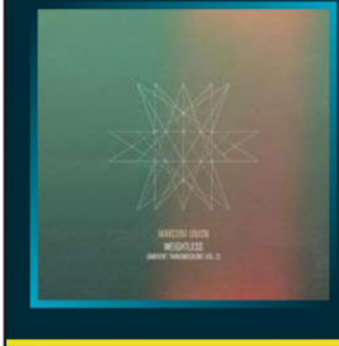
NEW FROM PROPER MUSIC

MANSUN
ONE EP

Mansun
ONE EP

Kscope start a comprehensive Mansun reissue campaign with the band's very first EP, originally on Parlophone and now on 12" vinyl for the first time and only available in independent stores. The Kscope reissues will delve into a treasure trove of previously unreleased audio and visual material while fully remastering the original album recordings for 5.1 and deluxe 180gm vinyl. *Catch Paul Draper on tour throughout the UK in February/March: www.pauldraperofficial.com*
KSCOPE

MARCONI UNION
WEIGHTLESS



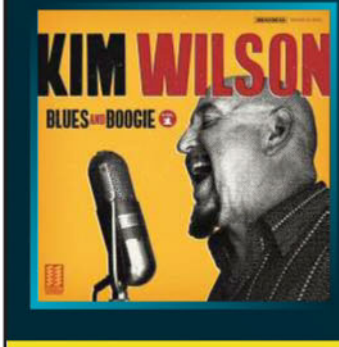
The stunning album by Marconi Union includes the title track Weightless Part 1, widely considered to be "the most relaxing track in the world". #1 in the Official Billboard New Age Charts for 38 weeks. More than 31 million YouTube views, more than 26 million Spotify streams, more than 10 million iTunes streams.
"8 mins 10 secs of aural bliss" - TIME MAGAZINE *"The album contains five more similarly translucently gorgeous tracks"* - THE SUNDAY TIMES
JUST MUSIC

WILSON & SWARBRICK
KAILYARD TALES

WILSON & SWARBRICK
KAILYARD TALES

Kailyard Tales is the follow up album to 2014's *Lion Rampant*. Sadly, it marks Dave Swarbrick's last studio album, recorded before he passed away in 2016. A folk-reggae epic surveying 400 years of music. Swarbrick's last studio release includes guests Martin Carthy, Dick Gaughan, Ian Campbell and son, UB40's Ali Campbell. *SWARB! IT SUITS HIM WELL UK TOUR w/ The Jason Wilson Band, Martin Carthy, John Kirkpatrick and Simon Swarbrick www.jasonwilsonmusic.com/shows*
WHEEL RECORDS

KIM WILSON
BLUES & BOOGIE VOL 1



Legendary singer and harmonica player Kim Wilson, from the Fabulous Thunderbirds, performs fourteen blues classics and two originals on his brand new solo album, *Blues and Boogie Vol 1*. Recorded over the course of two years in California, the group tackles classics from Little Walter, Sonny Boy, John Lee Hooker, Elmore James, Magic Sam and others. Available on both CD and LP.
SEVERN

PROPER WWW.PROPERMUSICGROUP.COM

Divide and rule

Monumental 27-disc survey of King Crimson's 1970-72 period brings no real surprises but some fantastic live material. By Ben Thompson.

King Crimson

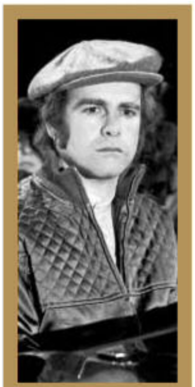
★★★★

Sailors' Tales

DGM/PANEGYRIC. **21-CD+4-BLU-RAY+2-DVD BOX SET**

"Look Andy, this is the groove and all he's done is remove the groove. You've got to keep the groove in your head and play a load of bollocks instead." Mutinous bassist Gordon Haskell's claim that his former school friend Robert Fripp overhead him advising drummer Andy McCulloch along these forthright lines may go some way to explaining why their particular (*Lizard*-era) incarnation of the King Crimson rhythm section was so short-lived.

If Haskell's "funky version of Cirkus putting in Average White Band-like licks" was ever actually recorded, it sadly did not make it onto this monumental 27-disc box set. But there is more than enough savage beauty and bourgeois ugliness (and vice versa) here to confirm that the transitional period between King Crimson's debut album, 1969's *In The Court Of The Crimson King*, and 1973's *Larks Tongues In Aspic* was as representative as any other of the band's peculiarly toxic brand of greatness.



Alamy

BACK STORY: DEAR JOHN

- Listeners straining to hear the difference between Robert Fripp and Steve Wilson's new mix of *In The Wake Of Poseidon* and the vinyl original might just as productively ponder the far greater contrast with the album King Crimson's management team's initial choice of stand-in lead vocalist would have made. Of course, the services of up-and-coming singer-songwriter Elton John (above) were no longer required once Fripp had heard his debut album, with Elton banking a face-saving payment of £250 and later having "rejection by the group King Crimson" listed by Oprah Winfrey as one of the personal difficulties he had bravely overcome.

Given that this was a phase of the band's development of which Robert Fripp might have easily observed "if it's me and Pete Sinfield on synthesized bongos, then it's King Crimson," the extent to which its highlights have held their own in the live repertoire of the revitalised ensemble's all-conquering 2014 line-up has been little short of miraculous. What purchasers of this sumptuously appointed £140 (at the time of writing) box set should not expect is any notable addition – at least in terms of new material – to the original tripartite recorded legacy of *In The Wake Of Poseidon*, *Lizard* and *Islands*, although the balance of famously rough-as-dogs US live album *Earthbound* is greatly improved by the addition of three extra tracks. What they will get – alongside the now traditional audiophile paraphernalia of Blu-Ray needle drops, new Steven Wilson mixes, additional tracks of questionable value (although the Greg Lake guide vocal version of Cadence And Cascade is nice) and a CD and a half of rehearsal/audition jams – is an insane quantity of ridiculously exciting live music.

After the departures of Ian McDonald, Michael Giles and Greg Lake at the end of 1969's debut US tour had turned Robert Fripp's earlier assertion that King Crimson's fundamental aim was to "utilise the latent power of chaos" into a classic case of be-careful-what-you-wish-for, it took survivors Fripp and the ever more influential Sinfield a full year and a half to mobilise a stable live band to tour the two new albums they somehow cobbled together in the meantime.

KEY TRACKS
- The Devil's Triangle
- Lizard
- Formentera Lady

"ROBERT FRIPP HAD 'CEASED TO BELIEVE IN THE BAND, BUT NOT IN CRIMSON'."

Of the treasure trove of painstakingly restored (and crystal clear) soundboard cassette recordings here assembled, the first to jump out are the trio of 'new to CD' warm-up shows from Frankfurt's Zoom Club in April 1971 – wherein after just a few weeks' rehearsal, Haskell's replacement Boz Burrell made a heroic stab at mastering Sinfield's notoriously florid lyric book while also playing the bass, an instrument that was new to him. This experience was so traumatic that it left him with no other therapeutic option but to form Bad Company, and in the course of a mischievously chosen cover of Donovan's Get Thy Bearings ("Get together, work it out, simplicity is what it's about") he sounds like he's having an actual nervous breakdown.

From the listener's point of view, though, it's thrilling stuff, and a supremely relaxed – yet amazingly 'on it' – Marquee show from a few months later (in this writer's opinion the pick of this heavyweight bunch) confirms the extent of Burrell's ultimate integration. With Fripp's guitar presiding like a sadistic magus, Mel Collins' battery of flutes and saxes doing the work of three orchestras, former Neil Innes drummer Ian 'Hammerhand' Wallace intermittently threatening to invent techno and the whole thing projected through the wonky gauze of Sinfield's VCS3 (to especially spooky effect on The Letters), the music is a match in terms of drama and formal innovation for anything Brian Eno was achieving in Roxy Music with one-time Crimson auditionee Bryan Ferry at around the same time.

Of course, it couldn't last for ever, although anyone who's worked their way through 10 and a half CDs, a Blu-Ray and two DVDs of the next year's US tour could be forgiven for imagining that it had done. By the time that marathon was over, Robert Fripp had "ceased to believe in the band, but not in Crimson". King Crimson's triumphant recent rebirth with Collins among the returnees has at once validated and undermined this strange notion of a band's essence as somehow divisible from its actual members.

While the oracular filigree of Pete Sinfield's lyrics was grist to the mill of sixth form satirists even at the time, hindsight now allows us to hear the apocalyptically carnivalesque Cirkus as a fly-on-the-wall documentary account of what it actually felt like to be a member of King Crimson in 1970-72. The line "Elephants forgot, force fed on stale chalk/Ate the floors of their cages" perfectly encapsulates the experience of those – like Haskell and McCulloch – left to join the dots of the music Fripp heard in his head. And "Megaphonium fanfare/In his cloak of words strode the ringmaster/Bid me join the parade" comes closest to making sense as a suitably baroque commemoration on the prog-rock Cyrano Sinfield's own rapid ascent up King Crimson's greasy pole.

As for what would happen next, well, let he who is without Pete Sinfield cast the first stone…

Get thy bearings: Robert Fripp, Hyde Park, 1969 as King Crimson prepare to support The Rolling Stones.

Fela Kuti

★★★★

Vinyl Box Set 4

KNITTING FACTORY. LP

Erykah Badu curates fourth set of long-players by Afrobeat's grand master.

Following three earlier box-sets, compiled by ?uestlove, Brian Eno and Ginger Baker, one might expect that Fela Kuti's legacy had been thoroughly picked-over. But these six albums – mostly favouring the era when Africa 70 were transitioning into Egypt 80 – attest to the depth of Fela's discography, and to the diversity of his message, exploring, as Badu notes in her impressionistic essays, "the complexity of complexion and the science of sexuality", and more besides. Indeed, this box stretches from the seething Coffin For Head Of State, a masterful slow burner meditating upon slavery, betrayal, religion and colonial domination, to Army Arrangement, where Fela baits corrupt soldiers over martial grooves, to Pansa Pansa (off 1992's *Underground System*, the final album released in Kuti's lifetime), a brooding response to the government's murderous assault on his Kalakuta compound, showcasing his electrifying skronk-organ runs over trademark Fela funk. Less the sound of a barrel being scraped, than a riot being started.

Stevie Chick

Butterfly Child

★★★★

Onomatopoeia

DELL'ORSO. CD/DL/LP

1993 debut, in the space between dream pop and post-rock.

Joe Cassidy was part of Rough Trade's new vanguard alongside Papa Sprain and Disco Inferno, inventive foragers who would soon be hitched to the post-rock bandwagon. 'Butterfly children' are young sufferers of a particularly fragile skin disorder, and as Butterfly Child, Cassidy valued frailty, across vocal deportment, sparse arrangements and gossamer melody. *Onomatopoeia*'s default setting to 'bliss' took various forms: spectral delicacy Queen Glass, the almost-pop jaunt of X:Celcius. But Cassidy also wielded sharper tools – Verte Ecolé's noise squall, a somnambulant Lunar Eclipse's late onset of ominous guitar loops, Eva's ambient unease. Shifting, neo-dance beats on Young Virgins Call For Mutiny and Our Lady Mississipp, and Who Said What To Whom's electro vapour trails, all further underlined the notion of a traveller following his own internal compass.

Martin Aston

Nat 'King' Cole

★★★★

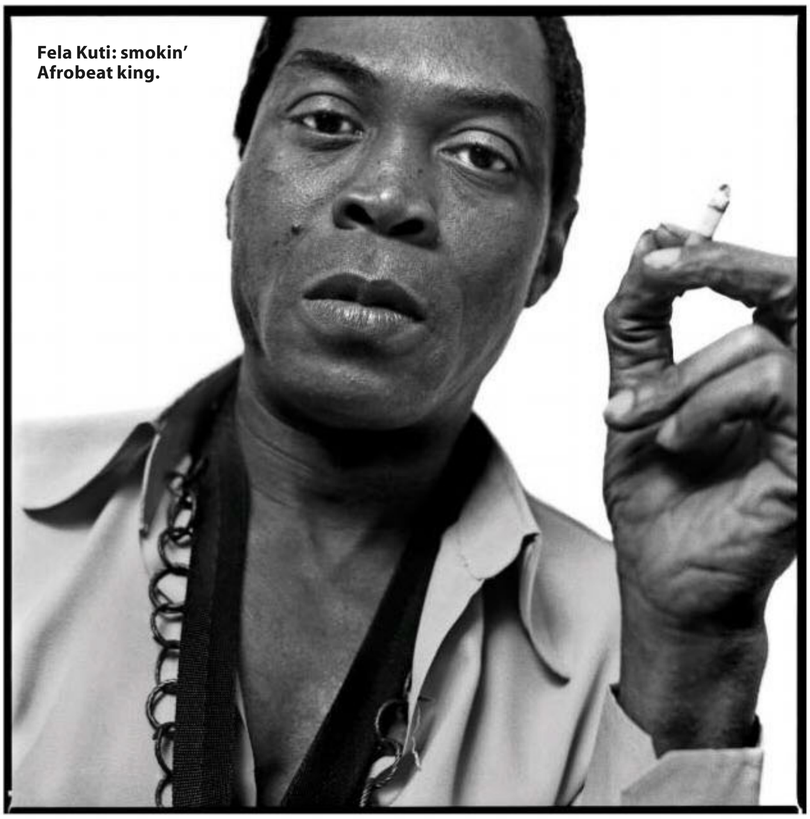
The Complete Nelson Riddle Studio Sessions

MUSIC MILESTONES. CD

When the Alabama singer met the New Jersey arranger.

Though Nelson Riddle's name is often mentioned in the same breath as Frank Sinatra's due to the pair's sensational collaborations for Capitol Records in the '50s, the noted arranger had worked extensively with Nat Cole for three years before he got the call from Ol' Blue Eyes. Riddle first collaborated with Cole in 1950 and, as this stupendous 8-CD box set illustrates, he was responsible for some of his biggest pop hits (including Mona Lisa and Unforgettable). He was also the musical catalyst that transformed a cult jazz pianist who occasionally sang into an urbane pop crooner who became a star and conquered white America. As the 216 remastered tracks on this gargantuan retrospective show, Riddle never swamped Cole with dense symphonic orchestrations, but rather offered subtle arrangements built around the singer's silky vocals.

Charles Waring



Fela Kuti: smokin' Afrobeat king.

Rick McGinnis

Linda Lewis

★★★

Funky Bubbles

TROUBADOUR. CD/DL

UK singer marks 50 years of recording with a box set.

Presented by Reprise in the early '70s as a stylistic amalgam of Joni Mitchell and Minnie Riperton, East End singer-songwriter Linda Lewis later morphed into an unconvincing disco diva at Arista. This 5-CD retrospective largely overlooks that period to focus on neglected aspects of her long career. Three '90s LPs appear in their entirety, and while they confirm that Lewis's best performances weren't limited to the 1970s, they're not as interesting as the disc of rarities that includes her first 45, 1967's Northern soul stomper You Turned My Bitter Into Sweet, as well as music she made with the band Ferris Wheel. Some of the Reprise material can be heard on the final disc (a 1973 concert recorded in Boston).

Charles Waring

Fairport Convention

★★★★★

Unhalfbricking

ISLAND. LP

The second of three great Fairports albums from 1969, back on limited vinyl.

For her second LP with Fairport, Sandy Denny introduced them to folk staple A Sailor's Life. They transformed it into an 11-minute seascape on electric instruments, deftly illustrating what could be done with the English tradition, as producer Joe Boyd asserts, in the way The Band had for Americana. *Unhalfbricking*, compiled by Boyd while the band recovered from the road accident that killed drummer Martin Lamble and Richard Thompson's girlfriend Jeannie Franklyn, has three songs from Dylan's unreleased Basement Tapes, including unlikely French-language hit single Si Tu Dois Partir. But Denny's unsettling Autopsy (for a love affair), peerless Who Knows Where The Time Goes and Thompson's Genesis Hall indicate what great writers they were becoming. The wordless sleeve with Sandy's parents outside their Wimbledon home (the pre-crash band visible in the garden) becomes more eloquent as every year passes.

Jim Irvin

Various

★★★★★

The Roots Of Popular Music: The Ralph S. Peer Story

SONY MUSIC LATIN. CD

Peer's peerless range of American pop.

As an A&R man for the budding recording industry of the early 20th century, and later as a song publisher, Ralph S. Peer helped invent what we know as American popular music. He was responsible for what many consider the first major blues record by Mamie Smith in 1920, the first major country records by The Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers in 1927 and many jazz and Latin classics. This extraordinary 3-CD box is a testament to Peer's big ears, including artists whose tracks he waxed and those whose hits he published: Bing Crosby, Tito Puente, Billie Holiday, Ray Charles, Buddy Holly, Flatt & Scruggs and so on. While he established genres to create markets, he also saw that music segregated by race or culture could be enjoyed by all if they only had the chance to hear it.

Michael Simmons

Various

★★★★

Treasure Isle Ska Rarities: The 7" Vinyl Box Set

TROJAN. LP

Twenty ska wonders, straight from the master tapes.

The Trojan reissue machine has kicked back into life with this exceptional box set of 10 ska 45s, taken from original master tapes and pressed on quality vinyl; only one of the sides has seen issue in its current form, the rest are alternate takes or unreleased material. Although producer Duke Reid was better known for the rock steady that defined his Treasure Isle stable in the mid-'60s, these earlier rarities show he had mettle in ska: The Spanishtonians' You Wish Me Bad, The Silvertones' My True Confession, Stranger Cole's Always Remember Me and Derrick Morgan's Know Your Friend are among its vocal peaks, and there are hot ska instrumentals from Baba Brooks and Lynn Taitt. Detailed notes clear up a few myths, making the box all the more desirable.

David Katz

Accelerated euphoric pop: the Ramones rocket.

Giant steppes

Ramones' classic third album with extras of alternate mixes, B-sides, outtakes and a December 1977 live show. By Jon Savage.

Ramones

★★★★

Rocket To Russia

RHINO. CD/LP

The Ramones were on a roll in 1977: *Rocket To Russia* was their third album in just over 18 months. The checklist was well established: a slamming first side of group compositions, with a) a slowie at track three and b) a definitive side-closer; a second side that contains a cover and that ends with a spiral into infinity. But this time they floor the formula into a charging, surging punk/psych masterpiece.

Leave Home had filled in the stark simplicity of *Ramones* with perceptual and psychedelic touches but *R2R* ups the game throughout: the production is fuller, the guitars are shinier and, on occasion, they jangle. We're A Happy Family is at the album's centre: with layers of overdubs, the Ramones' most complex and darkly humorous song to date (which, oddly, ends here on a full stop rather than a fade).

R2R displays a complete mastery of their chosen genre. Despite the revolutionary sound of their first album, they had always considered themselves a chart group. Never have they been so nakedly pop as here. Rockaway Beach and Sheena Is A Punk Rocker channel the uncomplicated euphoria of Surfin' Bird while Locket Love, Ramona and Here Today, Gone Tomorrow update teen romance tropes.

Until you listen harder. Here Today, Gone Tomorrow is astonishingly bleak: "someone had to pay the price". The primitive I Don't Care is in its circularity even more indicative of hopelessness than the nihilistic lyrics. We're A Happy Family makes light of a dysfunctional wasteland – refried beans, Thorazines and the like – the details of which make it clear that the Ramones know much of what they speak.

Something dark and disturbed lies underneath the shiny pop surface: well, it is punk. Sometimes it comes to light in self-reference and black humour: Cretin Hop and We're A Happy Family, with its sneered question, "what is minimalism?" Teenage Lobotomy and I Wanna Be Well bookend the middle of side two, while Why Is It Always This Way? climaxes the record with a circular, upwards riff and a horror movie storyline.

R2R only sags with a superfluous cover of Bobby Freeman's 1958 hit Do You Wanna Dance. Worthwhile additions are two separate overdub tracks for We're A Happy Family and earlier mixes that emphasise the group's speedy attack. The barnstorming live show, from Glasgow in December, reproduces with added Carbona the set from *It's Alive* – the New Year's Eve Rainbow concert that was the group's zenith.

Designed as a breakthrough, *R2R* stalled at Number 49 US. Its comparative failure took the heart out of the group – they blamed the Sex Pistols in part for muddying the punk waters – and they would never recapture the careening momentum of those first 18 months. Enjoy this accelerated, euphoric pop album – that never quite escapes its dark undertow – and think of what could have been.

RICHARD HELL
+THE VOIDOIDS
BLANK GENERATION

Richard Hell & The Voidoids

★★★★

Blank Generation (40th Anniversary Deluxe Edition)

RHINO. CD/DL/LP

Hell's Dionysian punk vision buffed up (but not too much).

Formed following his acrimonious exit from Television, Richard Hell's Voidoids offered a more pugilistic flavour of punk/junk poetics, guitarists Robert Quine and Ivan Julian squalling and skronking with violent invention across these 10 electrifying tracks. Hell's marvellously untutored holler is a treat throughout, vividly essaying the scuzzy buzz of the CBGB's scene ("Sexy love ricochets round everyone's part," he leers, on Down At The Rock And Roll Club), positing nihilism as escape from life's "perpetual jive" (Who Says?) and spieling junked-up beat poetry with snarling verve on the breathtaking title track, the very image of the romantic, doomed young poet he imagined himself to be. This reissue adds an extra disc of outtakes and a 1976 live set (from CBGB's, natch) that's low of fidelity, but packed with plenty of extra Quine/Julian action, and the Voidoids' brief discography proves you can never have too much of that.

Stevie Chick

Chris Gantry

★★★

At The House Of Cash

DRAG CITY. CD/DL/LP

Buried treasure from "the gunpowder in the pistol which fired the bullet of the outlaw movement".

One reason that Gantry – whose Dreams Of An Everyday Housewife was a Top 3 US single for Glen Campbell – isn't as renowned as buddy Kris Kristofferson is explained by this unreleased 1973 set. *At The House Of Cash* – recorded at Johnny's studio – resembles a Tim Buckley take on country: unpredictable, wayward, genre-unspecific, stretched by unabashedly dramatic crooning. Away Away is a lean, funky take on Nashville country-soul; Different is a slow, orchestrated blue melody; Tear is spoken-word babble and jazzy extemporising. Stoned immaculate? Or a manifestation of ADHD? It's a thrilling ride, and no wonder Gantry couldn't find label backing. Something he apparently accepted, stoically, and moved on, settling for cult status so he could stay true to his muse (more records, poetry and books).

Martin Aston

Various

★★★★

Saturday Night Fever 40th Anniversary Edition

CAPITOL/UME. CD/DL/LP

Joyous hike back to the summit of populist disco

Discussed, desired, derided, and displayed as Exhibit A in the death of disco; few actually seem to *listen* to *Saturday Night Fever* any more. To not do so is to deny oneself one of music's great pleasures. With the Bee Gees' Stayin' Alive, How Deep Is Your Love and Night Fever as its opening trio, this is imperious, shining music: age will not wither its warm, beguiling majesty and melancholic undercurrent. Elsewhere, Trammps' Disco Inferno combines soul's gospel heritage with a fine four-to-the-floor; KC And The Sunshine Band – one of the most important but overlooked outfits in '70s American music – put on their Boogie Shoes, while with Open Sesame, Kool And The Gang are captured on the cusp of travelling from the street corner to the boulevard. In its 40th anniversary edition with some quite-OK-actually remixes, *Saturday Night Fever* is in rude health.

Daryl Easlea

Pharoah Sanders

★★★★

Tauhid/Jewels Of Thought/Deaf Dumb Blind

ANTHOLOGY. DL/LP

Deluxe vinyl box celebrates the early solo journeys of jazz's astral traveller

In spiritual jazz's holy trinity, saxophonist Sanders is deemed the son to Coltrane's father and Albert Ayler's holy ghost. He was born Farrell Sanders in Arkansas and first made his mark playing on Coltrane's 1967 avant-garde masterpiece, *Ascension*. He was still playing with Trane when he debuted on Impulse! that year with *Tauhid*, which is revived in this lovingly-curated 3-LP box set alongside two other significant Sanders titles for the same label from 1969 and '70. The mesmeric Upper Egypt And Lower Egypt is the killer cut on *Tauhid*, while the transcendent Hum-Allah-Hum-Allah-Hum-Allah (with jazz yodeller Leon Thomas providing sublime vocals) is *Jewels Of Thought*'s standout. There's a palpable African influence on the percussion-laden *Deaf Dumb Blind*, whose epic Let Us Go Into The House Of The Lord is a shimmering 18-minute aural prayer. This is truly music to nourish the soul.

Charles Waring

PHAROAH SANDERS
JEWELS OF THOUGHT

Getty Images

Life turned him out that way: James Carr, a master of Southern soul.

The hurtin' kind

Tragic giant of Southern soul who stepped out of Otis's shadow. By **Geoff Brown**.

James Carr

★★★★

The Best Of...

KENT SOUL. CD/DL

OTIS REDDING'S celebrated 1967 arrangement of Try A Little Tenderness, sparked by Al Jackson's temperature raising drumming, is a highlight of his, and Southern soul's, catalogue. James Carr, another master of the genre, echoed the trick the following year on a deep soul burner titled Life Turned Her That Way, one of 20 songs on this new primer of a man felt by many to have been equal or, indeed, superior to Otis.

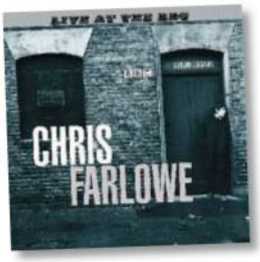
Born in Mississippi, raised in Memphis from the age of three and nourished by gospel, Carr was soon singing in local goups, his talent eventually spotted in a crowded market by local songwriter Roosevelt Jamison, who, after Stax declined, persuaded Goldwax Records' Quinton Claunch to give Carr a try. His second single, Got My Mind Messed Up, was a Top 10 US R&B hit, followed by Love Attack and the exceptional Pouring Water On A Drowning Man, a brilliant image of a man slowly sunk by love. Its jaunty tempo can't camouflage Carr's desperation, but this was as nothing to the next single.

At The Dark End Of The Street, written by Dan Penn and Chips Moman, who owned American Studios, the site of Carr's early recordings, was the perfect vehicle for the singer's rich baritone, with its leaps into raspy-edged emotion. Dark End moves with a slow, measured tread, its gentle, yet unforgiving reveal finding the singer/narrator accepting that he and his lover's assignations are bound to be discovered. It's a hypnotising opener here. At The Dark End Of The Street's transcendence has tended to overshadow his many other fine recordings, including the 19 here.

Tracks two and three – a cover of These Arms Of Mine and Love Attack – echo several of Otis's vocal tics, a recurring theme in Carr's career. The aforesaid Life Turned Her That Way is a terrific example of his empathy as he asks us to, "stop and consider what my baby's gone through/Just remember, I turned her that way." In keeping with the late '60s rise in black consciousness, Freedom Train is a forceful stomp –"Every man is gonna walk right proud, with his head up high." But it's the personal emotions rather than the political that Carr best engages with.

Carr and his producers profitably deviate from the Southern soul template for Lover's Competition, a New York sound, sung with less rasp than usual by Carr, more like Ben E King. I'm A Fool For You has a light pop feel; Lucky Loser adds country to that mix. His cover of the Bee Gees' To Love Somebody is heartfelt, I Don't Want To Be Hurt Any More has a hint of Sam & Dave's I Can't Stand Up For Falling Down, and Let It Happen – "just fall in love", he urges – sounds like a prelude to Dark End Of The Street.

Like a character in one of his songs, Carr's sublime talent was gradually crushed by life's hard knocks and bad career breaks, and his vulnerable psyche succumbed in later life when drink and drugs began to take their toll. Carr died in 2001 from lung cancer, aged 58.



Chris Farlowe

★★★

Live At The BBC

REPERTOIRE CD/LP

The singer's singer across the airwaves.

In September 1966, Chris Farlowe was a guest of Otis Redding – who called him "a soul brother" – on a special edition of Ready Steady Go! A London jazz club veteran, he'd recently hit with Jagger/Richards' Out Of Time and was poised for greater success. Andrew Oldham pumped money into big productions. There was a ready supply of Jagger-produced Stones covers. But it never happened. This 2-CD collection, drawn from BBC sessions taped between 1965 and '69, amply reveals the talent. But the Islington belter, who described Out Of Time as "just another pop song", was, as interviews here suggest, as guileless about the business as he was a giant at the mike. Three versions of Paint It Black and a 1969 song Gemini that strays into Vanilla Fudge territory point to his next move – fronting Colosseum.

Mark Paytress

Getty Images

Geater Davis

★★★★

Sweet Woman's Love

BEAR FAMILY. DL/LP

Outstanding first album by the Kountze, Texas singer born Vernon Davis.

"I want you to cry," Geater Davis howls on his cover of Cry Cry Cry, the Bobby 'Blue' Bland ballad. "I want you to cry baby," he wails, the tension rising. Then there's a sob, before the scream, "Get down on your knees and cry." It's the apotheosis of beggin', pleadin' heartbreak soul. It's also the centrepiece on Davis's *Sweet Woman's Love*, his astonishing 1971 debut, recorded in Birmingham, Alabama, with producer Allen Orange and issued on Orange's House of Orange label. Davis not only sang but also contributed searing blues guitar to the album. It's his voice, though, that elevates him above his peers; raw but tender on the title track, his sole US R&B Top 50 hit; choked up on My Love Is So Strong For You; agonised on Wrapped Up In You.

Lois Wilson

The Necessaries

★★★★

Event Horizon

BE WITH. CD/DL/LP

Arthur Russell's power-pop excursion gets fine-sounding reissue.

When Arthur Russell joined The Necessaries in 1981, the group were already a name on the New York downtown scene, with a debut single produced by John Cale, and a support slot on The Pretenders' first North American tour. Propelled by Modern Lovers bassist Ernie Brooks, Red Crayola drummer Jesse Chamberlain and Chris Spedding on guitar, singer Ed Tomney's songs point to both the angular jangle pop of R.E.M. and the moody drift of The Magnetic Fields. However, the reason we're here is that five of *Event Horizon*'s 12 tracks were written with Arthur Russell following Spedding's departure, and they exist on another plane entirely, possessed of both a buoyant unmoored sadness and a dizzy, propulsive euphoria. So, while Tomney's songs point the way to certain futures, Russell's follow a route that still mystifies and confounds.

Andrew Male

Clarence Carter

★★★★

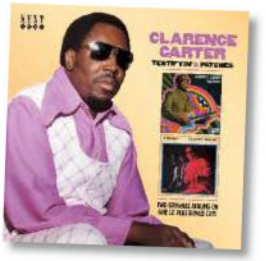
Testifyin' & Patches

KENT SOUL .CD/DL

Fame LPs three and four from fine, fruity-voiced Southern soul man.

Although 1970's *Patches* has Clarence Carter's biggest world-wide hit as its title track, 1969's *Testifyin'* is the better album, with the beefy uptempo Snatching It Back and Soul Deep, the smirking humour of I Smell A Rat and Back Door Santa, and Carter's own take on James Carr's signature song. He renders it as Making Love (At The Dark End Of The Street), setting the scene via a long rap about how animals of the field tend to make love wherever the notion strikes them whereas humans take a sneakin', guilty-pleasure route – the back seat of a car along a lonesome country road or, indeed, the dark end of a city street, at which point the quietly vamping band rises to the occasion, as it were, in a swelling musical climax. It must have played just as well on-stage. There are three strong bonus tracks from a rare 1971 EP.

Geoff Brown



Mike Bloomfield

★★★★

Live At McCabe's Guitar Workshop, January 1, 1977

ROCKBEAT. CD/DL/LP

A night with an original rock guitar god.

Though too few in the 21st century are aware of him, the late Mike Bloomfield was one of the mightiest blues and rock guitar slingers of all time. Revered for work with Dylan, The Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Electric Flag and pal Al Kooper on *Super Session*, he had unmatched tone and dexterity and was an encyclopaedia of American roots music. In this show at the venerable McCabe's, he covers gospel (You Must Have Jesus), country (Walking The Floor Over You), a New Orleans doper's ode (Junko Partner) and a delightfully smutty blues (Women Lovin' Each Other). Backed by a trio including longtime partner Mark Naftalin on keyboards and jazz bassist Buell Neidlinger, he executes razor-sharp slide and blinding note clusters as well as fleet fingerpicking. The one drawback is his so-so singing, but he's relaxed here and his six-string mastery moots it.

Michael Simmons

The Searchers

★★★

Another Night: The Sire Recordings

OMNIVORE. CD

Complete set of timeless Liverpool institution's new wave-era recordings.

Tom Petty's 1978 single Listen To Her Heart openly nodded to Liverpool's Searchers. Just as they had influenced The Byrds in the '60s, their marriage of clean guitars and folky harmonies was influencing a later generation of musicians. Sire Records' Seymour Stein knew this and so signed The Searchers and, with barely any retooling, made them fit for the new wave. The two resultant albums from 1979 and 1980, collected here along with alternate versions from their various configurations plus an unreleased track, were exactly what they should have been: twinkly guitar pop at one with that being made by much younger wearers of skinny ties. With band originals and cool covers such as Big Star's September Gurls, Ducks Deluxe's Love's Melody and The Records' Hearts In Her Eyes, this welcome collection shows that some bands could remain eternally contemporary.

Kieron Tyler

SUFJAN STEVENS
THE GREATEST GIFT
MIXTAPE
OUTTAKES, REMIXES & DEMOS FROM CARRIE & LOWELL

Sufjan Stevens

★★★★

The Greatest Gift

ASTHMATIC KITTY. CD/DL/LP

Elegant outtakes, demos and remixes from Stevens' 2015 opus.

Described by the man himself as a "mixtape", *The Greatest Gift* lifts a veil of sorts on Stevens' creative process in the making of *Carrie & Lowell*, his extraordinary, profound response to the death of his mother. Some of the songs here may not have made it onto *Carrie & Lowell* directly – but everywhere there are wisps of melody and rhythmic patterns from the songs that did. And more to the point, this is a beautiful record in its own right. From the breath-stealingly intimate iPhone demo of John My Beloved to a delicate Helado Negro remix of Death With Dignity, these shreds and patches have the poignant, half-there quality of going through the possessions of someone dear who has died. Its incompleteness, then, is as apt a reflection of grieving as you could hope for.

Sophie Harris

Fifty Foot Hose

★★★

Cauldron

AGUIRRE. LP

Pioneering early acid-electronica, rediscovered.

Surfacing amid the pell-mell of early psychedelia and founded around a nucleus of Cork Marcheschi (bass/home-made synths), David Blossom (guitars) and Nancy Blossom (vocals), San Franciscans Fifty Foot Hose fused acid-rock and electronic music. Kindred spirits of Silver Apples and The United States Of America, their inability to stir much beyond indifference from contemporary audiences saw them split shortly after their debut's release. Fifty years on, however, it's those more out-there moments that make *Cauldron* worthy of exploration: 10-minute epic Fantasy, where the group jam wildly against a whirlwind of Marcheschi's home-made electronic monstrosities; Red The Sign Post, Nancy's incantatory howls lending the band a space-rock-L7 vibe, and Rose, an inspired, erotic slither perfectly matching the group's avant ambitions and acid-rock chops. A cover of God Bless The Child, meanwhile, proves Marcheschi could wield his proto-synths with impressive tenderness, too.

Stevie Chick

VINYL PACKAGE OF THE MONTH

Thelonious
Thelonious Monk Quintet Blows for LP
Sonny Rollins
Thelonious Monk

Thelonious Monk

The Complete Prestige 10-inch LP Collection

CRAFT

Monk was a one-off: a glorious maverick who tore up the jazz rule book and produced extraordinary music that was defined by angular, chromatic melodies, and piquant dissonances. He took a lot of flak early on and even some of the albums contained here, which are now regarded as classics, had scorn poured on them. Given that 2017 is his centenary year, it's not surprising there's been a slew of reissues. Undoubtedly the best of them is this highly desirable limited edition 5-LP box set, which comprises all of the sides that Monk waxed for Bob Weinstock's Prestige label between 1952-1954. They're presented as they were first released, as 10-inch LPs, complete with original artwork and accompanied by perceptive liner notes from Monk biographer, Robin D.G. Kelley. *CW*

Mariza
Fado em mim

Mariza

★★★★

Fado Em Mim

PARLOPHONE. LP

A star is born, and makes stardom look simple.

They may not have been a blue-chip export, but Portugal's blues were hardly an unknown quantity abroad when Mariza dos Reis Nunes released her debut in 2001, yet few would have predicted that it was going to be that easy to find a successor to the recently passed Amalia Rodrigues, the queen of fado for much of the previous 50 years. Mariza had star quality, delighting picture editors (rococo black dresses and an ornate peroxide hairdo never hindered anybody) but she had the chops, too, as at home with traditional guitar accompaniment as she was introducing jazzier elements or tackling grand ballads backed only by piano (the two versions of Ó Gente Da Minha Terra show why she kept Portuguese purists happy and crossed over with such consummate ease). Also, newly on vinyl, the 21-track *Best Of* that shows what happened next.

David Hutcheon

Various

★★★

Heed The Call!

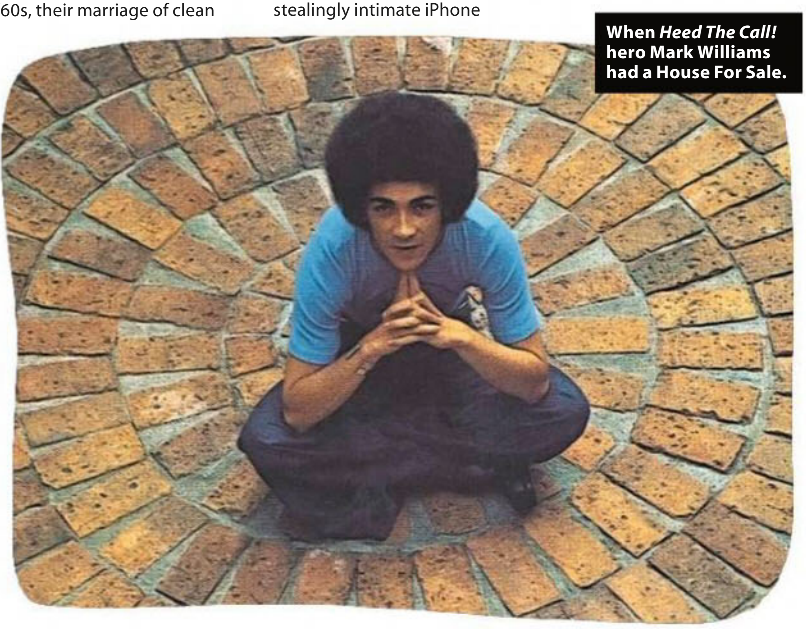
VOSTOK. CD/DL/LP

Get on down(under): unearthed Kiwi disco.

Disco is hardly the first genre that springs to mind when thinking of New Zealand, home to Neil Finn and the indie label's indie label Flying Nun. Largely rooted in the indigenous Maori population and Auckland's immigrant Polynesian community, the scene produced genuine domestic hits from Mark Williams and Golden Harvest. The best cuts here though come from '60s garage rocker Larry Morris, who finds his funk on Who Do We Think We're Fooling after five years in prison for LSD possession, and an elastic funk version of Rita Jean Bodine's That's The Kind Of Love by The 1860 Band – literally named after the tavern where they were the house band. It's not all Studio 54 glory, however, and The Pink Family's Don't Give Your Life Away sounds like even less time was spent on the production than the recording.

Andy Fyfe

HEED THE CALL!



When *Heed The Call!* hero Mark Williams had a House For Sale.

FILEUNDER

Do the spasm

Jerking around a cult's cute collection. By Jim Irvin.

Cramping style: Fur Dixon, Lux Interior and Poison Ivy feed their jukebox.

Rex

I met The Cramps once. They were delightful company and most encouraging to my tyro band appearing on the same bill. And they certainly put their backs into their work, Lux Interior giving his all during soundcheck, rehearsals and the final show, proverbially swinging from the chandeliers at every opportunity. Like all great one-offs they'd created a cultural cul de sac for themselves, and they threw a party in there, rock'n'roll as kitschy karnival, served with a dash of graveyard smash, a tongue in the cheek and spiked drinks for all.

Forming part of an extended tribute to their very particular aesthetic, the fifth instalment in a possibly limitless series gathering the kind of tunes The Cramps deeply dug, *Jukebox In Crampsville* ★★★★ (Righteous) is a hoot. Sixty cuts that veer from the bizarre to the berserk. Or the both. Take I'm The Wolfman, Round Robin's raucous gumbo of fuzz and growl with the hero as a hairy sex pest, or its complete opposite, the mysterious Mr Sunshine's country-flavoured public service announcement, Marijuana The Devil's Flower.

There's plenty of daft teenage cash-ins, from the list of concerns that generates Pimples And Braces by Ric Gary to the finger-clicking parody Teenage Beatnik. Buzz-Buzz-Buzz is a doo wop classic that challenges you to keep still, while fans of raunchy sax will appreciate Bob Bunny's Scatty Cat, Bob Taylor's After Hours (Flyin' High), Boom Stix by Curly & The Jades – a tassel-shaking stomper complete with Bo Diddley rhythm, wailing sax and swinging drum solo – and the outrageous Frank Motley & His Motley Crew's crazed rocker with overdriven spoken asides about the benefits of Honkin' At Midnight.

Other stirring sounds include the absurd slap-back echo landscaping Sidney Jo Lewis's Boppin' To Grandfather's Clock and the rubbery momentum of The Nomads' Icky Poo.

In a region beloved by The Cramps, the unlikely crossover, we find Akim's Voodoo Drums, a tiki twist, and Garrett Williams' literally offbeat Motorcycle Millie, which may be the lone example of rockabilly reggae. Fling, by The Phaetons, could easily have provided the inspiration for Cramps classic Human Fly, and I loved Bing Day's supercool Mama's Place, with its great lower layer of double bass. Talking of which, it's always a pleasure to hear the rumbling voice of twilight zone dweller Ken Nordine, here with a fable called What Time Is It? Meanwhile, Johnny Beeman's two-parter Laffin' Beatnik gets the award for most hope over reason in a recording studio.

All are songs you could imagine making Lux and Ivy grin from ear to ear when they first heard them. Fiercely mastered from scratchy vinyl and rather light on info about the tracks' provenance, this hard-copy playlist is nonetheless great fun and makes you want to throw the kind of party that would do it justice.

JUKEBOX IN CRAMPSVILLE

"JOHNNY BEEMAN GETS THE AWARD FOR MOST HOPE OVER REASON IN A RECORDING STUDIO."

THE ASSOCIATION "LIVE"

The Association

★★★★

Live

VARÈSE SARABANDE. CD/DL

Before the double-live LP became a statement of '70s rock machismo, these West Coast sunshine poppers gave us this four-sided delight. Recorded in April 1970, it's uplifting, with some of the best live harmony singing ever. *AM*

Here's The Man!!!
Dynamic
BOBBY BLAND

Bobby Bland

★★★★

Here's The Man!!!

HOODOO. CD/DL

His 1962 LP with Turn On Your Love Light, a much covered first US pop hit, still terrific. Plus, Stormy Monday Blues, Who Will The Next Fool Be and no filler. Of 10 bonuses, his pain sounds real on How Does A Cheatin' Woman Feel. *GB*

PHYLLIS HYMAN
DELIVER THE LOVE
THE ANTHOLOGY

Phyllis Hyman

★★★★

Deliver The Love

SOULMUSIC. CD/DL

From late '70s pop-soul-disco (You Know How To Love Me) and big ballads to jazzier work with McCoy Tyner, Gary Bartz, Michael Henderson, Pharoah Sanders; just part of a full life on this 2-CD, 33-tracker. Sadly, she overdosed in '95. *GB*

Gladys Knight & The Pips

★★★★

2nd Anniversary

ELEMENTAL. CD/DL

Marking two years on Buddah, an LP with Top 30 hit Part Time Love, The Pips' ever-inventive backgrounds, some treacly material, all lifted by Gladys's leads as on Jim Weatherly's Where Do I Put His Memory. *GB*

Skids

★★★★

Scared To Dance

CAROLINE. CD/DL

A feast for Skids-scholars as the Fife agitants' '79 debut of frantic-melodrama expands to a 3-disc box: 12 pre-album demos indicate rapid growth; the 1978 Marquee gig, source of Into The Valley flip TV Stars, is presented in its full glory. *KC*

CHRIS SPEDDING
THE RAK YEARS

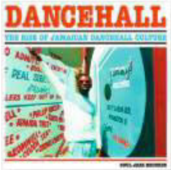
Chris Spedding

★★★★

The RAK Years

CHERRY RED. CD/DL

UK session guitarist's four LPs for Mickie Most's RAK label, on 4-CDs. All worthy of rediscovery, but 1977's *Hurt* is the real delight: machine-tight rock'n'roll pop-punk to an almost motorik beat from drummer Clem Cattini. *AM*



Various

★★★★

Dancehall

SOUL JAZZ. CD/DL/LP

Presenting the 'essence of dancehall' is a bold claim, but even in abridged 22-track version this '07 comp is an unbeatable primer: spanning '78-93, veteran singers, deejays and digital raggamuffins all jump and prance for joy! *KC*

DEUTSCHE ELEKTRONISCHE MUSIK

Various

★★★★

Deutsche Elektronische Musik 3

SOUL JAZZ. CD/DL/LP

Soul Jazz's final set of German rock and electronica, 1971-81, moves from familiar (Neu!, Cluster) to unexplored (Dzyan, Michael Bundt), bucolic to futuristic but always with a gentle, uplifting groove. *AM*

FILTER REISSUES EXTRA

The Paul Butterfield Blues Band

★★★★

Born In Chicago

VARÈSE SARABANDE. **CD/DL**

More musicianly than their UK counterparts – the leader's harmonica, Mike Bloomfield's urgent guitar, drummer Sam Lay's crisp swing – this 16 song *Best Of* reveals '60s-early '70s multiracial blues power. *GB*

Elephant's Memory

★★★

Elephant's Memory

ELEMENTAL. **CD/DL**

For 1971-73 this NY outfit were Lennon/Ono's band. Their '69 psych-jazz-rock debut is wild, cacophonous, horn-heavy, hip, sunny, communal. Popular locally and of their time, but worth investigating. *GB*

The Fall

★★★★★

A-Sides 1978-2016

CHERRY RED. **CD**

Fifty-one singles played by loads of different line-ups; yet under the iron rule of counterblast-caudillo Mark E Smith it's all one, bringing primal/avant-rock rumble and caustic paranormal disquisitions. Get the seven-disc version for the flipsides. *IH*

The Flock

★★★

Truth

ESOTERIC. **CD/DL**

Their *Columbia Recordings 1969-1970* (two LPs, 12 bonuses, six previously unheard). Unusual prog jazz-rock band with violin (Jerry Goodman) and horns. No keyboards, but intricate arrangements (Uranian Sircus). Anyone ready for The Kinks' Tired Of Waiting as prog? *GB*

Burnt Friedman

★★★★

Anthology 1980-2017

NONPLACE. **CD/DL**

Long-standing collaborator of late Can drummer Jaki Liebezeit, this compendium of rare tracks from Friedman's four decades making music play fast and loose with trad rhythms. Electro jazz, avant-garde and techno, it's playful, hypnotic and absorbing. *SW*

Julie London

★★★

The Singles 1955-62

FINE & MELLOW. **CD/DL**

Smoky Californian singer's sultriest singles on 2-CDs, with a number of tracks (Night And Day, Meaning Off The Blues) never previously available on CD. Sound quality and levels are all over the place, docking the collection a star. *AM*

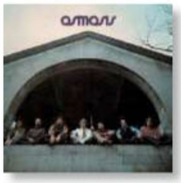
Motörhead

★★★

Motörhead 40th Anniversary Edition

CHISWICK. **CD/DL**

The LP Lemmy's speed-and-Special Brew desperadoes made when on the verge of quitting and it's hard to argue with fast, wart-throated biker rock. Incudes the Beerdrinkers EP and seven unissueds. *IH*



Osmosis

★★★

Osmosis

ESOTERIC. **CD/DL**

This Boston septet were a true instrumental powerhouse, fusion pioneers mixing gut-bucket blues, fuzz-rock and electric jazz in a heavy stew. Despite weedy vocals and pop production, their sole 1970 LP demands to be heard. *AM*

Ray Parker Jr & Raydio

★★★★

For Those Who Like To Groove

BBR. **CD/DL**

Session guitarist/writer's late '70s hits with Raydio (Jack And Jill; You Can't Change That) 'til solo Number 1, Ghostbusters. Two CDs of happy pop-soul. *GB*

The Oscar Peterson Trio

★★★★

Night Train

STATE OF ART. **CD**

Montreal jazz piano great in 1962, playing R&B covers and Duke Ellington, with rhythm section Ray Brown (bass) and Ed Thigpen (drums). Cool and effortless, its benign moods echo across the years. *IH*

Stack Waddy

★★★★

So Who The Hell Is…

CHERRY RED. **CD/DL**

Three CDs of studio LPs, live cuts and rarities from early '70s Manchester quartet whose uniquely greasy brand of primal R&B that stole from Beefheart, Blue Cheer and Chuck Berry and prided itself on overdrive, filth and collapse. *AM*

Various

★★★★

2018 Blues Calendar And CD

BLUESIMAGES.COM. **CD**

The 24-track CD has restored super-rare blues 78s by Tampa Red, Memphis Minnie and more. The calendar's out-of-sight '20s artwork and key dates, so you'll never miss Irene Scruggs's birthday again. *IH*

XTC

★★★★

Black Sea

APE HOUSE. **CD/BR**

From 1980, XTC's fourth found them in rocking new wave guise: this CD and Blu-Ray Surround Sound edition has the original mix, a Steven Wilson-helmed 2017 stereo re-rub and a 5.1 version, plus instrumentals, B-sides, demos. *IH*

ZZ Top

★★★

Antenna

FLOATING WORLD. **CD/DL**

The first fruits of a $35m RCA deal, Gibbons & Co's 1993 LP ditched the supercharged cyberblues for a soulful back-to-basics Texan boogie. It lacks the hooks, and riffs of their best work but Gibbons' guitars sound just nasty enough. *AM*

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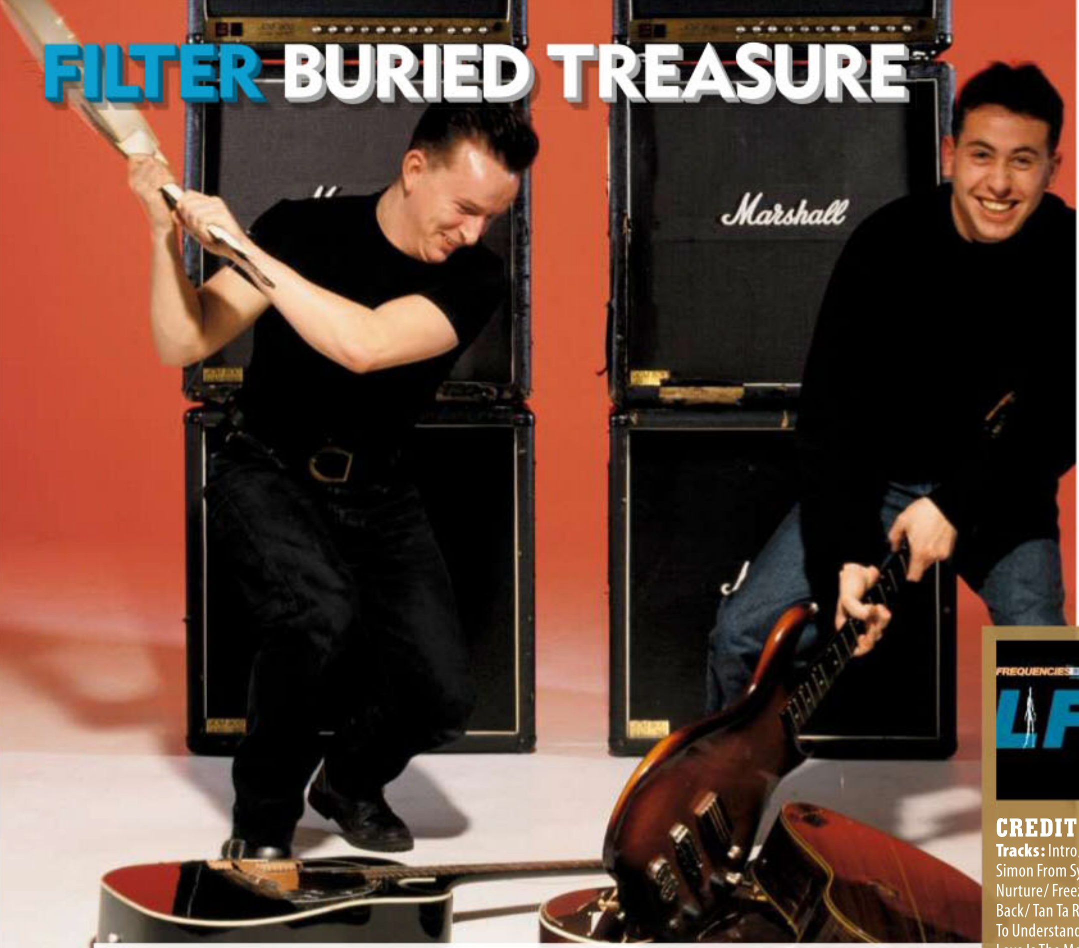
COMING NEXT MONTH
Field Music, Hollie Cook, Franz Ferdinand, Felt (pictured), Joan As Police Woman, John Oates, Bert Jansch, Eric Clapton, Sarah Blasko, Mogwai, Baxter Dury, Fleetwood Mac and more.

PP Hartnett



Quantum bleeps

This month's enigma exposed: Leeds techno youth create the record Kraftwerk should have made.

LFO

Frequencies

WARP, 1991

Close, but no guitar: LFO's Mark Bell (left) and Gez Varley smash it up in 1992.

Steve Double/Camera Press

Leeds' early-'80s breakdancing scene may have been far from the movement's Bronx birthplace, but it nurtured a surprising amount of musical talent. Future Yorkshire bass fiends including Forgemasters, Unique 3 and Nightmares On Wax all jostled for space on the lino outside the Merrion shopping centre; local lads Gez Varley and Mark Bell were also among the young b-boys who later formed groups. Their name: LFO, for the low-frequency oscillation synthesizer function.

By early '89, house music from Chicago had supplanted electro and hip-hop as the groovers' choice of transatlantic stimulus, and the pair were working on tracks. Depeche Mode and Mantronix fans both, they marshalled their basic set-up of keyboards and drum machines and recorded on tape. Martin Williams, AKA DJ Martin, who would play the nascent LFO's material off cassette as part of his sets at Leeds club the Warehouse, was also involved. "Me and Mark were jamming together, doing the music," says Varley. "Martin was the DJ side, saying, 'It's got to start like this, come in like this…' He played a big part in it."

One early recording, also entitled LFO, was heard by Forgemasters' Robert Gordon, a producer at Sheffield's FON Studios and co-founder of the Warp label. This track – a raw house assault with a bass line to dislodge fillings in ravers' mouths and a title enunciated robot-style by a Speak & Spell toy – would be LFO's debut single. It sold 130,000 copies and was a Number 12 hit in August 1990. One endorsement came from zany Radio 1 jock Steve Wright. "He slagged it to fuck," says Varley. "He had to play it, so he speeded it up, slowed it down and put duck noises over it, all this shit, and said, 'This is the worst record ever!'"

> **"STEVE WRIGHT SAID, 'THIS IS THE WORST RECORD EVER!'"**
> **Gez Varley**

Wright may have objected to its mechanoid futurity and lack of guitars, chorus and middle eight, but the still-teenage Bell and Varley – Williams had jumped ship – showed a more traditional mindset with their next move. The house boom mostly favoured tracks over long players, but when they went to ground in Bell's loft/bedroom in Wakefield for the rest of 1990, their aim was to create an album. Their hardware included a Casio SL-10 sampler, a "really cheap" Fostex multitrack mixer and a Korg Bass Station bought with a publishing advance.

"We just wanted to record," says Varley. "There was no real pressure, which is how you get the best stuff. [Technology-wise] we didn't have a lot of options, so we had to make do – to just use two effects, but to learn them inside out. It was good working with Mark. He *always* had ideas – you'd be bouncing them around… I really do miss that."

After what Varley estimates as a nine-month period, the tracks were sequenced: with its shifts in style, pace and atmosphere – as well as its rhythmic invention, giant bass sounds and melodic sophistication – what resulted is that rare thing among '90s electronica, a satisfying long-playing listening experience that still stands up. Employing a slowed-down voice of doom, the portentous, scything Intro stated LFO's program, elevating the Chicago innovators over European pop-house contenders ("What is house?/Technotronic, KLF, or something you live in?/To me, house is Phuture, Pierre, Fingers, Adonis…"). A cerebral kind of weight is employed on the mysterious Simon From Sydney (named for an Australian licenser), while We Are Back is steely and combative, claiming the title "true creators".

"Obviously we're not the *real* creators," says Varley. "We just thought it would be cool to make a statement. We'd got slagged off a lot [for LFO] – you've sold out, blah blah – so We Are Back was kind of just to say, 'Fuck off', really!"

Side two of the old vinyl retains a particular charge, with the elastic, chiming Tan Ta Ra leading to a chamber of deep psychedelic delirium, with You Have To Understand and Love Is The Message giving way to the final, exhausted Think A Moment. "We wanted to take the listener on a trip," says Varley. "What really influenced me as a concept was Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side Of The Moon*. I hadn't listened to [*Frequencies*] for years but when I did a few years ago, it worked almost perfectly."

Released in August 1991, the album's chart zenith was 42. February 1992's storming What Is House EP was also a specialist taste, though to publicise it the group were featured on the NME's cover smashing and burning guitars. "We got some right feedback about that," says Varley. "Heavy metal kids giving us abuse in pubs, saying, 'Who the fuck do you think you are, degrading heavy music?' I said, I grew up on heavy metal, it's just to get a bit of shock. Which it did."

In 1992 they began to play live, while an invitation to collaborate came from Richie Hawtin (an earlier session with Kraftwerk's Karl Bartos remains unreleased). Yet it would be four years until the next LFO album, *Advance*, and at the beginning of 1997, Varley quit.

"It was going a bit funny," he says. "For about six or seven years he was my best mate, but we fell out… Mark working with Björk was part of the fall-out."

Afterwards, Varley recorded solo and as G-Man; Bell carried on as LFO for 2003's *Sheath*, and collaborated with Björk from 1997's *Homogenic* until 2011's *Biophilia*. Tragically, Bell died on October 8, 2014, after complications from surgery.

"We didn't speak for six, seven years," says Varley, "but the half year before he passed away we talked on Facebook, loosely, about doing the band again. I was playing in Leeds one night and Mark was meant to come but he had to go back to Iceland where he lived… that was a few months before he passed away."

Today, Varley is making an LP with ex-Krush man Mark Gamble, using vintage gear. "I want to get back to old ways of thinking, and working around limitations," he says. "I don't want to copy *Frequencies*, but it needs to have that innocence. And I'm thinking people need to hear it, because life goes so quick."

Ian Harrison

FREQUENCIES
LFO

CREDITS

Tracks: Intro/ LFO/ Simon From Sydney/ Nurture/ Freeze/ We Are Back/ Tan Ta Ra/ You Have To Understand/ El Ef Oh!/ Love Is The Message/ Mentok 1/ Think A Moment

Personnel: Mark Bell, Gez Varley (synths, programming)

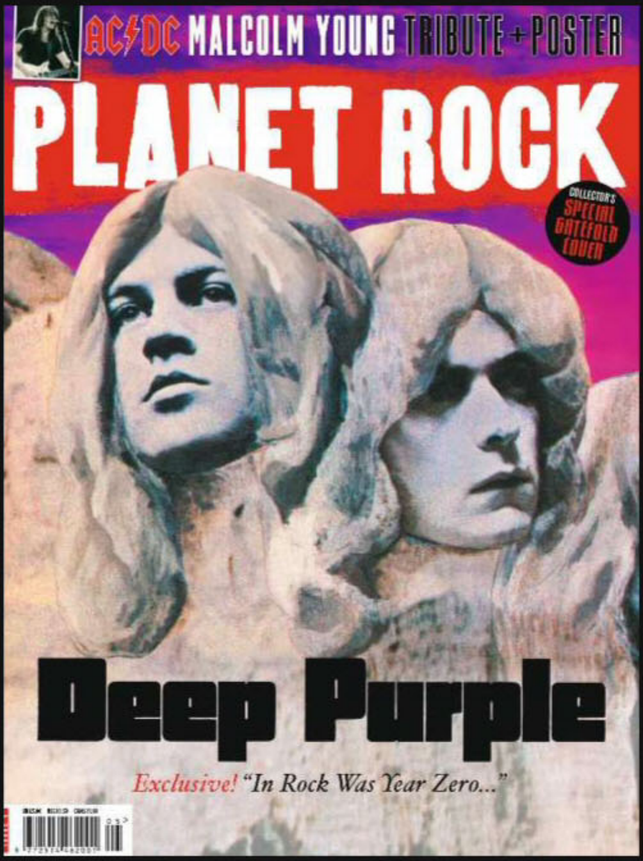
Producer: LFO, Martin Williams

Recorded: Mark Bell's bedroom, FON Studios

Chart peak: 42

Current availability: Warp CD

“I’M A SPEED KING SEE ME FLY”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Deep Purple
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Let your yé-yé be yé-yé: Françoise Hardy filming a TV show in 1967; (right) the singer in 1990.

FRANCESTANCE

Françoise Hardy

French pop's existential romantic. By Andrew Male.

In 1962, as The Beatles were singing Love Me Do, an 18-year-old Parisian was on the outside, looking in. "I go alone in the streets," sang Françoise Hardy on her debut EP, "a soul in pain."

Listen to Tous Les Garçons Et Les Filles now and it's easy – especially if you don't speak French – to hear a sweet young girl rocking gently to le yé-yé pop sound. 1962, however, was also the year of Jacques Brel's Paris Olympia concert, Orson Welles' The Trial, and the first English translation of Martin Heidegger's Being And Time. Beatnik existentialism, the Cold War and Chanson Française were all big news and only one female songwriter was incorporating such "shadow of the bomb" ideas into teen chart pop: we underestimate Françoise Hardy at our peril.

Born in Paris on January 17, 1944, this strictly-raised convent girl grew up chronically shy, with mere mendicant ambitions until music, in the form of Trenet, Aznavour, Brel, Gréco, and Piaf, and hazy Everly Brothers broadcasts on Radio Luxembourg, changed her world. But after being signed to Disques Vogue as a female Johnny Hallyday in 1961, she insisted on writing her own material. She also became a '60s fashion icon, with admirers including Dylan, Jagger and Nick Drake. But independence didn't come easy. She retired from concert performances in 1968, defeated by nerves. After protracted legal battles with Disques Vogue, she signed with the independent Sonopresse label in 1970, but the creative freedoms she'd longed for didn't translate into record sales.

This tension, between existential despair and romantic yearning, is what defines her finest records, which exist in a delicious suspended netherworld between freedom and compromise, forever waiting for the day, as she sang on Tous Les Garçons Et Les Filles, "when I will no longer be a lost soul/[when I] will find someone who loves me."

"WE UNDERESTIMATE HER AT OUR PERIL."

CAST YOUR VOTES!

This month you chose your Top 10 Françoise Hardy LPs. Next month we want your Mott The Hoople and associated Top 10. Send your choices to www.mojo4music.com or e-mail your Top 10 to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk with the subject 'How To Buy Mott'. We'll print the best comments.

françoise
hardy
The Vogue Years

10 Françoise Hardy

The Vogue Years

CAMDEN DELUXE CD 2001, £4.99

You Say: "*The Vogue Years* compilation is a lovely thing." Anna Twigg, via Twitter

Assembled like 2013's *Midnight Blues* (see Number 2) by Saint Etienne's Bob Stanley, this stellar compilation collects 50 of Hardy's finest Disques Vogue works from 1962 to 1967. Sequenced chronologically, it is possibly the most enjoyable way in which to learn about how she moved away from early '60s yé-yé pop, experimenting with elements of folk rock, chanson, country and psychedelia, incorporating lyrics of emotional complexity and existential depth. Hardy's first three Disques Vogue releases (recently reissued on vinyl in glorious mono by Light In The Attic) all feature a few duff tracks, but there are no such worries here.

FRANCOISE
HARDY
Entr'acte

4 Françoise Hardy

Entr'acte

WARNER BROS 1974, DOWNLOAD £7.99

You Say: "Melancholia, passion, fear, dark rooms, alcohol, pleasure. Her golden era." Corinne ST-D, via Twitter

A concept album about a one-night stand ("an intermission") with a married man, directed to her husband Jacques Dutronc during a troubled period in their relationship, *Entr'acte* is Hardy's most overlooked long-player. Although barely 30, she sings of "a heart that thought itself too old", the lyrics moving from thoughts of nervous anticipation, to assignation, to post-coital regret (as she sings on Chanson Noire, "From blind insanity/To lucid despair"). Against lazily sensuous guitar loops, rippling synths, and the softly sighing string arrangements of Jean-Pierre Castelain, *Entr'acte* is the mournful second act of *La Question* (see Number 1), and almost as essential.

Getty Images, Alamy (2)

MESSAGE PERSONNEL
FRANÇOISE HARDY

9 Françoise Hardy

Message Personnel

WARNER BROS 1973, DOWNLOAD **£7.99**

You Say: "Mature sensibility, sophisticated arrangements and great songs." Alan Benavente, MOJO Facebook

Recorded for WEA with its artistic director Michel Berger, *Message Personnel* found Hardy working to someone else's vision for the first time since her Disques Vogue days. Entering the studio still weak, following the birth of her son Thomas, she deemed herself "more an interpreter than a writer" and has mixed emotions about the resulting album. But the results are frequently stunning, from the cinematic strings of Michel Bernholc to the distorted guitars and breakbeats on Serge Gainsbourg and Jean-Claude Vannier's L'Amour En Prive. The desolate half-spoken/half-sung title track points towards the conceptual narrative of 1974's *Entr'acte*.

Françoise Hardy

8 Françoise Hardy

Et Si Je M'En Vais Avant Toi

SONOPRESSE 1972, DOWNLOAD **£10.99**

You Say: "Country-folk style far ahead of French production at the time." Romain Pontaud, MOJO Facebook

Recorded at London's Sound Techniques with a band featuring Fotheringay's Jerry Donahue on guitar, and Dave Peacock of Chas And Dave on bass, this is Hardy's most overtly country rock LP. A huge commercial flop, it's worthy of a revisit, as behind its slide guitars and rocking rhythms are raw songs of emotional disconnect and failed relationships ("He is my stone wall/And I'm his background noise," she sings on Bruit De Fond). Bowm, Bowm, Bowm meanwhile, is one of Hardy's loveliest songs, a hymn to meditation (and quite possibly sex) that displays the overt influence of Nick Drake on her songwriting.

françoise hardy

7 Françoise Hardy

L'Amitié

DISQUES VOGUE 1965,
LITA REISSUE CD **£15.55**

You Say: "The best of her early albums." David Shaw, via e-mail

The second album recorded in Pye studios in London with producer Charles Blackwell, following dissatisfaction with Disques Vogue's in-house arrangers. *L'Amitié* consolidated the new-found confidence of 1964's *Mon Amie La Rose* – Hardy choosing her own songs and working with UK session musicians on a sound that combined Spector's Wall Of Sound with freakbeat guitars and country harmonies – resulting in her most enjoyable Disques Vogue release, featuring French chanson with haunted Brill Building melodies, Big Jim Sullivan and Jimmy Page's fuzzed-up guitars, and, in Hardy's lonesome lyrics, a world of twilight romance that dies with every sunrise.

FRANÇOISE HARDY

6 Françoise Hardy

Soleil

SONOPRESSE 1970, DOWNLOAD **£9.99**

You Say: "She gradually came out of melancholy." Mossi Visual, MOJO Facebook

Her first for Sonopresse was recorded in collaboration with the writing/production team of future Foreigner guitarist Mick Jones and his drum partner Tommy Brown, with contributions from novelist Patrick Modiano and arrangements by Jean-Pierre Sabar and Jean-Claude Vannier. Like Frank Sinatra's Reprise debut, *Ring-A-Ding-Ding!*, *Soleil* is something of a defiant fuck-you to the old label, and an attempt to show them how it's really done. A mature cross between earlier Disques Vogue angst-pop and the late-'60s baroque stylings of The Zombies, in sweetly swooning songs like Je Fais Des Puzzles and Fleur De Lune, *Soleil* blueprints a sound Abba would transform into a global brand four years later.

ma jeunesse fout le camp.

5 Françoise Hardy

Ma Jeunesse Fout Le Camp…

DISQUES VOGUE 1967, DOWNLOAD **£8.99**

You Say: "When the yé-yé girl saw her way forward." Graham Young, via e-mail

In November 1967, with her Disques Vogue contract at an end, Hardy set up her own production company, Asparagus. However, still managed and distributed by Disques Vogue, she became caught in an unhappy limbo between creative freedom and pop demands. The result is this mournful, introspective act of work-to-rule. With an LP title that can be interpreted as "My youth has fucked off" (Hardy was 23) and song-titles translating as The End Of Summer and There Is No Happy Love, *Ma Jeunesse Fout Le Camp…* is the singer at her exquisitely reflective best, aided by the wintry arrangements of future Led Zeppelin bassist John Paul Jones.

3 Françoise Hardy

Comment Te Dire Adieu

DISQUES VOGUE 1968, DOWNLOAD **£8.99**

You Say: "Contains some superb cover versions." Darren Hughes, via e-mail

Following the defiant one-note melancholy of *Ma Jeunesse Fout Le Camp…*, for her follow-up Hardy became song-hunter, working with British arrangers Arthur Greenslade, Mike Vickers and John Cameron to refashion Phil Ochs's There But For Fortune, Ricky Nelson's Lonesome Town and Leonard Cohen's Suzanne. There are tracks by Serge Gainsbourg too, at his filthy best on the bitingly assonant title-track and prison masturbation monologue L'Anamour, plus Antonio Carlos Jobim, and future Nobel prize-winner Patrick Modiano. It's a baroque orch-pop album capturing the unrest of Paris '68; a sense of darkness and swirling unease beneath the urban romance.

FRANÇOISE HARDY
Midnight Blues

2 Françoise Hardy

Midnight Blues

ACE 2013, CD **£8.99**

You Say: "Hardy singing in English gives it a special feel." Bobby McBride, MOJO Facebook

Assembled from three hard-to-find English language LPs (*En Anglais*, *One-Nine-Seven-Zero* and the album eventually titled *If You Listen*), this 2013 Bob Stanley compilation neatly documents Hardy's post May '68 transformation from yé-yé pop chanteuse to moody folk-rock existentialist. Majoring on work with Tommy Brown and Mick Jones, plus London recordings with Fotheringay and Fairport Convention alumni (Nick Drake was also present, too withdrawn to contribute), this mixture of surprising covers (Beverley Martyn, Neil Young, Trees) and originals is Hardy at her wistful best, her hesitant English vocals adding an extra questioning note to autumnal songs of uncertainty and doubt.

FRANÇOISE HARDY

1 Françoise Hardy

La Question

SONOPRESSE 1971, DOWNLOAD **£11.89**

You Say: "*La Question* will do nicely…" Ron Wontae Kim, MOJO Facebook

Released on the tiny Sonopresse label in October '71, Hardy's second LP for her Hypopotam production company is a complete conceptual break from her pop past. Co-written and recorded with Paris-based Brazilian singer/guitarist Valeniza Zagni da Silva – AKA Tuca – *La Question* traces the highs and lows of Hardy's turbulent relationship with Jacques Dutronc and Tuca's unrequited love for Italian actress Lea Massari. Hung on Tuca's weightless bossa nova rhythms and Raymond Donnez's sensual strings, this intense, haunted and hypnotic LP rises and falls with a powerful dreamlike eroticism, caught between "la petite mort" and death itself.

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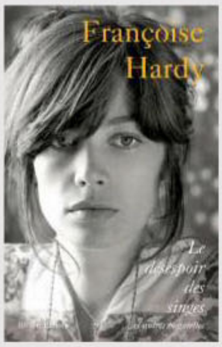
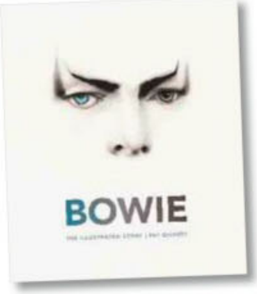


There's something good on every Françoise Hardy LP, so if you've already fallen for her classic 1962 74 recordings, check out her disco reinvention on 1978's *Musique Saoûle* and 1982's *Quelqu'un Qui S'en Va*. Others worthy of investigation include 1988's *Décalages* (despite the of its time gated drums production) and 1996 comeback *Le Danger*, where Rodolphe Burger's guitar atmospherics assume the role of Jean Claude Vannier string arrangements – it has aged surprisingly well. In May 2018 there's an English translation of Hardy's 2008 memoir, Le Désespoir Des Singes… Et Autres Bagatelles See YouTube, for 2016 documentary La Discrete.



Bowie: The Illustrated Story

★★★★

Pat Gilbert

VOYAGEUR. £24.99

A coffee table book that's actually worth reading.

There are brick-sized volumes dedicated to the manifold ciphers and nuances of David Bowie's songs, while a library shelf of biographies make plausible claims to be 'definitive'. So pity the writer given just 200 pages to nail the life and work of arguably the greatest pop star ever, and in a format which favours photographs over words. Luckily, Pat Gilbert knows his craft, and fashions a necessarily abridged narrative that's still thorough and authoritative. Although this book is tailored for the entry-level-curious, with little scope for deep analysis of Bowie's art, as a former MOJO editor Gilbert appreciates the value of the tiniest detail. Thus, an interview with Beckenham Arts Lab associate Keith Christmas yields new insight about Bowie circa 1969's free festival and *Diamond Dogs*-era stardom: titbits to excite the Ziggy-wonks who might assume this lavishly presented tome offers nothing for them.

Keith Cameron

What Does This Button Do?

★★★

Bruce Dickinson

HARPER COLLINS. £20

Iron Maiden singer's autobiography: a polymath's tale.

BRUCE DICKINSON

It has been a full life, in which Dickinson, now aged 59, has fronted one of the world's biggest bands, worked as an airline pilot, and survived head and neck cancer. In this memoir, bullish self-belief is mixed with wisdom, pathos and knockabout humour. The funniest material dates back to his early band, Samson, where he wailed over "stoned guitar, speeding bass and a drummer on downers periodically losing consciousness", and in the battle of wills between him and Iron Maiden's leader, Steve Harris. The poignancy comes in depictions of his mother, a former ballet star ("the dancing had gone out of her"), and of a solo gig in Sarajevo during the Bosnian war, where a visit to an orphanage brought him to tears. "I just wanted to tell a good story," Dickinson says. Music is only a part of it.

Paul Elliott

Cover Me: The Stories Behind The Greatest Cover Songs Of All Time

★★★

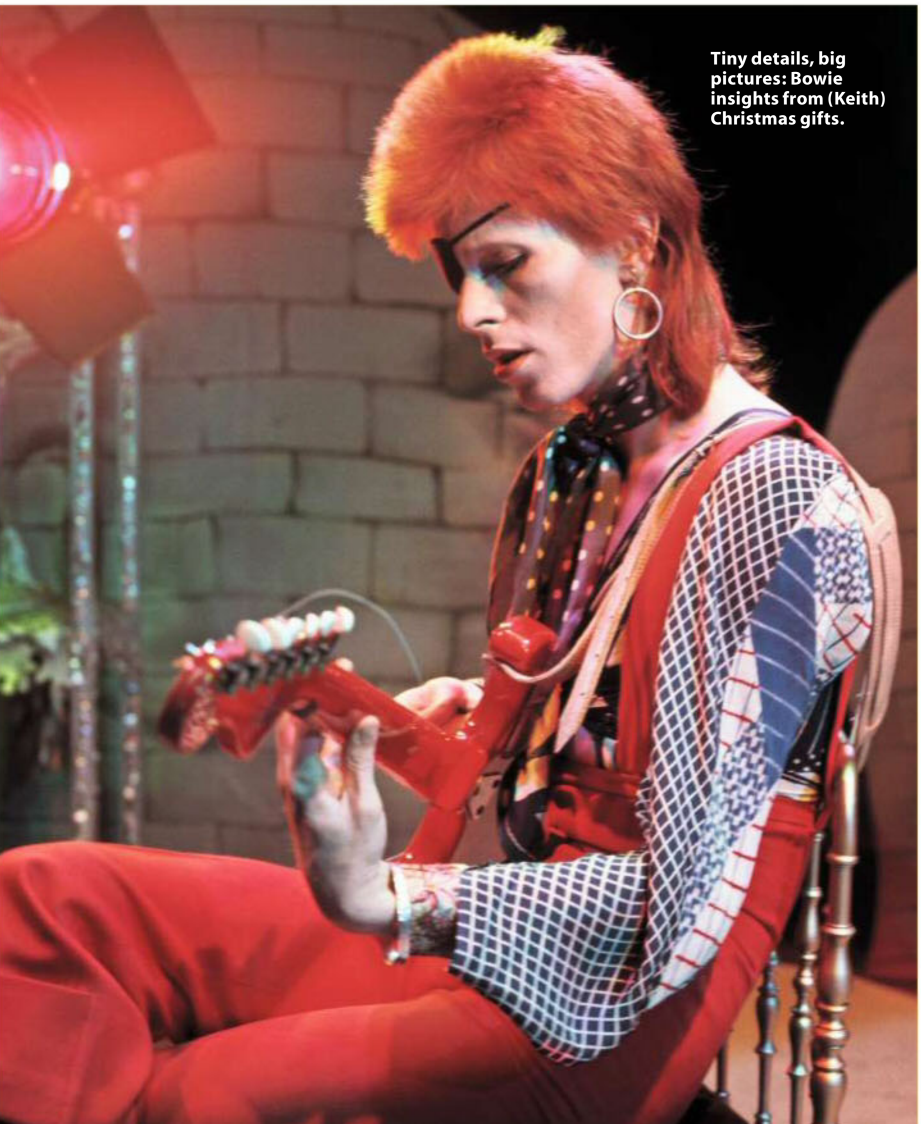
Ray Padgett

STERLING. £19.99

An enjoyable and often informative spin through recording industry re-dos.

The cover song has journeyed from ubiquity in the 20th century – a concept so de rigueur that no one bothered to coin the term until 1949 – to ubiquity in the 21st, when, Wired reported in 2012, 12,000 cover songs were uploaded to YouTube daily. Padgett traverses that route via 19 tracks, including expected cuts (Aretha Franklin's take on Otis Redding's Respect) and oddballs (The Gourds on Snoop's Gin And Juice). Padgett's breezy essays often move beyond the grooves, exploring social issues, which warrant and have received deeper dives, industry trends, and the power of a cover to shift fortunes for good and for ill. Standout chapter: Unchained Melody, whose music was composed in the 1930s, resurrected with lyrics for the 1955 prison film Unchained, and eventually resulted in The Righteous Brothers landing two versions simultaneously in the US Top 20 a quarter-century after their original hit. *That's* a story.

Chris Nelson



Tiny details, big pictures: Bowie insights from (Keith) Christmas gifts.

On Power: My Journey Through The Corridors Of Power And How You Can Get More Power

★

Gene Simmons

DEY STREET BOOKS. £12.99

Integrity-free motivational guide on how to make money by the Kiss artist.

GENE SIMMONS
ON POWER
MORE POWER

Kiss bassist Gene Simmons makes no bones about being in thrall to the mighty dollar and the influence it brings. He quotes Margaret Thatcher: "Being powerful is like being a lady – if you have to tell people you are, you aren't," before telling us at length how much power he has. Like another tasteless New Yorker with desperate hair, Simmons has an inflated sense of self, and On Power is a laughably bad self-help guide, full of thoroughly disagreeable opinions. Pump yourself up by saying "power" in the mirror each morning, he advises, and remember that "the caveman who brings home the most meat gets the girls". His 'pantheon of power players' includes Napoleon, Churchill, Machiavelli and Kevin Spacey's (double murderer) Frank Underwood. He sees no finer American than Colonel Sanders. Crass and cynical, On Power is not the worst rock star book I've read, but it's in the top one.

Ben Myers

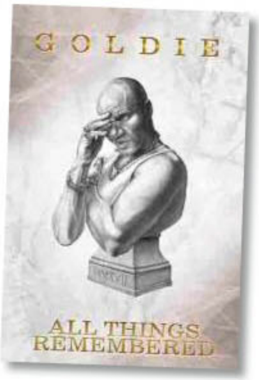
All Things Remembered

★★★★

Goldie

FABER & FABER. £18.99

Drum'n'bass literary mix of rants and emotionally-charged eloquence.



The gold-toothed UK drum'n'bass polymath's memoir is sequenced like an old school quadruple album, with chapters for each of his 51 years and work-in-progress afterword. Chronology is abandoned as Goldie remixes events like a DJ set, combining street patois with articulate reasoning and therapeutic rants that dazzle, horrify, tickle or move, whether blasting his music's "gentrification", Hoxton hipsters in "their fucking cunt beards" or heartbreakingly reliving his mother's death. Memories include being abandoned by his parents aged three, Dickensian care homes, childhood abuse, '80s New York graffiti schooling, mastering gold mouth 'grills' in Miami, early UK drum'n'bass rumbles, bonding with Bowie at Metalheadz, shameless reality TV appearances and 30 years on cocaine, before finding relative peace in Thailand with a new family and hot yoga. While providing the drum'n'bass movement's defining treatise, Goldie's multilayered recollections make for a remarkable autobiography on any level.

Kris Needs

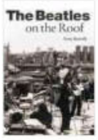
The Beatles On The Roof

★★★

Tony Barrell

OMNIBUS. £14.99

Author reconstructs The Beatles' last show with help from those present.



Tony Barrell maps The Beatles' story from their founding of Apple Corps in January '68 to their last live performance atop the roof of their Savile Row offices a year later, in an attempt to contextualise that final public appearance as a part of the cultural landscape. Music insiders – film-maker Michael Lindsay-Hogg; Ready Steady Go! producer Vicki Wickham; '60s authority Keith Altham – aid him well, as do an impressive round up of fans who were present. Barrell also digs deep to uncover the mechanics of the show, talking to engineers and Apple staff including receptionist Deborah Scarfe, who had a hidden microphone up her skirt on the day to record any interesting chat in the lobby. A sometimes glib turn of phrase and lack of emphatic understanding of the political activism of the time lets the analysis down though.

Lois Wilson

Alamy

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La la love you

With a new album around the corner, Kim and Kelley Deal are back where they belong. By Chris Nelson.

The Breeders

The Showbox, Seattle

It's not as if The Breeders have been gone. Their *Last Splash* line-up reunited five years ago for a 20th anniversary reissue and tour, and they've been gigging since. In fact, they've played more than 150 shows during the last decade. But when they walk on stage at The Showbox, there's a feeling that order has been restored.

Maybe it's having alt-rock hitmakers returning to the stage in alt-rock's epicentre at a time when the rest of the world's gone topsy-turvy. Maybe it's having a new single out and an album on the way that makes this gig one step more than a rehash. Maybe it's just knowing guitarists Kim and Kelley Deal are long clean of the drugs and drink that threatened to ruin them, and that band members are now living within blocks of each other back in Ohio.

Whatever the reason, in this space and time, Saints makes an ideal opener: slightly and unapologetically nostalgic for music of yore. "Summer is ready when you are," Kim sings with eager invitation. Message from the crowd: we're ready, too. Three songs later, the new cut Wait In The Car kicks the door wide open. "Good morning!" Kim shouts. As Kim and Kelley both lean into the impressionistic refrain – "As a sinner, I…" – fans are dancing, fully out of their shells.

Over and again the Deals take pains to play the role of thoughtful hosts. Five songs in, Kim has asked *twice*, "Are you guys still doing all right?" She'll ask three more times before the night's out. Kelley affectionately refers to opening band Melkbelly as "cute kids". (For the record: Melkbelly drummer James Wetzel is a monster pounder.)

The band even treat the covers as if they've been given responsibility for public treasure. Kim and drummer Jim Macpherson are in lockstep for an honouring take on I Am Decided, the Guided By Voices song they first covered in their side venture, The Amps.

Backstage after the show, Kim rcalls seeing aggressive bands at Boston's the Rat club during her Pixies days. Aggro artists took fewer risks than those who actually engaged with fans on the floor.

"I always thought if the band never looked at me, they were just fearful or something," she explains. As a fan, "I prefer when somebody actually notices I'm there, and is taking the stage, [saying], 'I'm here, and we're dealing with something right now,'" she says. "That to me seems a little bit more aggressive than just looking down and playing, but looking mean, and then looking down *and* mean."

In Seattle, The Breeders are downright nurturing. The closest they come to mean is when the Deal twins prod each other into hysterics. After Kelley needles her sister off mike, Kim sputters, "*You* say something, you're so fucking smart." The pair crack each other up, and we get a sense of what the Deal household may have felt like after school in 1976.

The sisters, of course, have two bandmates in this, their "classic" line-up. (It's mildly odd that their original roster with co-founder and Throwing Muses guitarist Tanya Donelly – the one that recorded Kurt Cobain's beloved *Pod* album – isn't the band's "classic" line-up, but then they never had an MTV hit.) Bassist Josephine Wiggs is stolid over 23 songs. Macpherson is fastidious throughout, nailing his hi-hat with a carpenter's precision.

The crowd's adoration snowballs through the set. Bang On, an ace cut from 2008's *Mountain Battles* (recorded with neither of the classic line-ups), puts Kelley's harmonies front and centre and is over way too soon. The Velvets-y Off You – from 2002's *Title TK*, same non-classic line-up – is arrestingly vulnerable. Even lesser tunes like No Aloha earn big shouts. When Cannonball concludes, Kim looks happier at the satisfaction on fans' faces than she did blasting through the song itself.

They close with a triple play. Gigantic, Kim's Pixies jewel, becomes a showcase for Kelley's guitar squall. Divine Hammer – which is really Gigantic Redux, with a first-person POV rather than third – breezes by on Macpherson's rolls, rides and fills. Then, assisted by the audience, Kelley sings the fiddle part on Drivin' On 9. On record, the song is a question mark, but in this room, band and fans together, it's an affirmation.

Kim puts her arms around the room in one last bear hug for the road. "Thank you so much for asking us to play," she says, as if we were all hanging in our friend's garage. Ever considerate, ever appreciated.

A big, big hit in Seattle: thoughtful hosts The Breeders Kim (main pic) and Kelley (bottom row, second from left); Josephine Wiggs (bottom, far right); the full line-up (bottom row, centre, from left) Kelley, Kim, Josephine, Jim Macpherson.

"THE DEAL TWINS PROD EACH OTHER INTO HYSTERICS."

Nate Watters (7)

SETLIST

Saints / S.O.S. / Invisible Man / Wait In The Car / I Am Decided / Night Of Joy / Fortunately Gone / Pacer / Bang On / Off You / No Aloha / New Year / Cannonball / Happiness Is A Warm Gun / Glorious / Hag / Safari / I Just Wanna Get Along / Do You Love Me Now? / Gigantic / Divine Hammer / Drivin' On 9 / Walking With A Killer

Miss America Dreams

The lionised, sui generis voice plays in Europe for the first time since 2008. By Ian Harrison.

Mary Margaret O'Hara

Grote Zaal, TivoliVredenburg, Utrecht

This Sunday evening is night four of Le Guess Who?, an annual multi-venue blowout of music for the cognoscenti, whose prize performances have so far included The Residents, Aldous Harding and The Bug Vs. Earth. No one, though, has the cache of Toronto's blessed Mary Margaret O'Hara, whose cult repute rests on her unconstrained, transcendent voice and 1988's extraordinary album *Miss America*. She hasn't played outside North America in a decade.

Consequently, it seems slightly unreal when, at 8pm, she arrives on stage. Joined by cellist Peggy Lee, guitarist/pianist/drummer Aidan Closs and her brother Marcus on musical balloons, the singer – in shades and dressed in black – meanderingly thanks curator Perfume Genius as if it's the most normal thing in the world, as strings begin to worry and scrape. Then without warning, she's scat-singing hair-raising bird calls, growls and deep groans, accompanied by spasming jazz percussion and the amplified squeaking of a deflating party balloon – for nearly 10 minutes.

Such a freak out/improv is cruel indeed for anyone expecting respectful recreation of *Miss America*, but Mary Margaret is happily unfazed when dealing with a heckler. "You know you're talking to an angel?" she asks the confused complainant, before delivering the *coup de grâce*. "Yourself!"

She's a strange mix of unselfconsciousness and nerves as she delivers excited asides and wanders the stage. Lee guides her into crooning a darkling, carny version of jazz standard Pennies From Heaven that is both touching and troubling. After an adoring introduction for sibling Marcus – a genial Furry Freak Brother – echoes of Tom Waits continue with another freeform piece wherein she babbles over a clumping jazz opera-cum-parlour ballad that appears to include Donald Duck speaking in tongues.

We alight on firmer ground with an appealingly shaky segue of the century-old vaudeville song I'm Forever Chasing Rainbows and Somewhere Over The Rainbow: tremulous and lurching, they recall Tiny Tim, another outsider voice adept at bringing out the ghostly qualities of the American songbook. There's seriousness of another kind with her Christmas song Never, No. Played straight with electric guitar, its conflation of joy and pain shows what an affecting stylist she remains. With a possibly too-comic, balloon-squeezing version of Solomon Burke's Cry To Me falling between them, warm and shimmering takes on *Miss America*'s When You Know Why You're Happy and Help Me Lift You Up also find her at peace with her material, revisiting the twanging, ambient-country late '80s with controlled abandon. The latter's campfire song of reassurance involves beauteous melisma, with Closs playing harder as she howls and jazz-sings through an antique brass car horn. As sustained, warm applause fills the room and she says, "That's a long time ago…," it's hard not to feel regret that a voice such as this is so rarely heard.

The sense of witnessing a genuine event, and a performance that was to be taken on its own terms or not at all, outweighs any doubts, though. Like Le Guess Who? itself, there was simply nothing like this happening anywhere else on the planet.

Mary Margaret O'Hara, that's who! (above) on-stage in Utrecht; (below) backstage with her brother and musical balloonist Marcus O'Hara.

> **"YOU KNOW YOU'RE TALKING TO AN ANGEL? YOURSELF!"**
> **Mary Margaret O'Hara**

SETLIST
Improv / Pennies From Heaven / Improv / I'm Always Chasing Rainbows / Somewhere Over The Rainbow / Never, No / When You Know Why You're Happy / Cry To Me / Help Me Lift You Up

Sara Amroussi-Gilissen (2)

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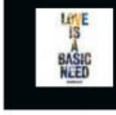

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John Carpenter

Aragon Ballroom, Chicago

The Kentucky-bred son of a music professor, John Carpenter made his name as a director of sci-fi and horror films – from 1974's Darkstar to 2010's The Ward – for which he composed and performed the scores. In the past few years, since releasing a pair of albums of original material and an anthology of his soundtracks, the erstwhile auteur has found a new career as a touring act, playing his film music to audiences of adoring fans.

On this frigid autumnal evening, Chicago's Aragon Ballroom is filled with several thousand devotees of the director. The crowd roars as 69-year-old Carpenter – dressed in black, silver pony tail dangling down his back, flashing double peace signs – arrives on stage.

Fronting a five-piece band, he leans over a synthesizer and pushes into the first notes of the theme from Escape From New York. As a screen projects images from the post-apocalyptic adventure – flashing clips of Kurt Russell's grizzled, eye-patched mug – Carpenter is off on an 80-minute journey through his visual and sonic history.

"Good evening… we're gonna play some songs from my movies," he says by way of formal introduction, reaching back to his 1976 break-out Assault On Precinct 13 and working up its menacing dinosaur riffs and Tangerine Dream atmospherics. Carpenter's compositions typically move between that brand of brawny synth rock and the more minimalist classicism of scores like those for Village Of The Damned and The Fog.

The concert is more than Hollywood novelty however, with the main surprise coming in the form of Carpenter's crack band, led by his son Cody on lead synth, and highlighted by the work of lanky guitarist Daniel Davies. The son of The Kinks' Dave Davies (and Carpenter's godson), he provides a visual and musical spark, peeling off a series of lacerating solos, matched by the intensity of a rhythm section made up of Los Angeles scene aces John Spiker on bass and Scott Seiver on drums.

The night *HE* came home: John Carpenter puts the frighteners on Chicago; (below) stalked by children in the Village Of The Damned; (insets) the soundtrack albums.

In between the familiar fare, Carpenter offers up several numbers off his recent *Lost Themes* LPs. "These are soundtracks to movies in your mind," he notes. The standout is Vortex, a whirling dervish that even compels Carpenter to begin dancing behind his keyboard. The director is happy to ham it up, later donning the iconic Ray-Bans from his anti-Reagan consumerist nightmare They Live, while playing bluesy trills on its main theme, Coming To LA.

Beyond his own work, Carpenter pays homage to his films' outside composers, starting with Starman, "my one and only love story," he notes. Penned by Jack Nitzsche, Starman Leaves proves a lush organ fanfare. At the opposite end of the spectrum is Ennio Morricone's score for The Thing, with its sinister pulse and foreboding melody auguring doom.

After a selection of songs from Carpenter's cult flicks – the brawny ballast of Pork Chop Express from Big Trouble In Little China and the Latin-tinged bite of Vampires' Santiago – he brings things to a climax with material from his horror classics, starting with the Halloween theme's pizzicato plucked tension.

"One thing I want to leave you with: please drive carefully going home," says Carpenter before a finale of the killer car anthem from Christine.

Carpenter and company take a collective Beatle bow before exiting quickly – but for the audience, the vivid sights and sounds of the evening are sure to linger.

"THE THING'S SINISTER PULSE AND FOREBODING MELODY AUGURING DOOM."

SETLIST

Escape From New York: main title / Assault On Precinct 13: main title / Village Of The Damned: March Of The Children / The Fog: main title / Vortex / Mystery / They Live: Coming to LA. / Starman: Starman Leaves / The Thing: main theme – Desolation / Distant Dream / Big Trouble In Little China: Pork Chop Express / Wraith / Halloween: main title / In The Mouth Of Madness: main theme / Body Bags / Vampires: Santiago / Prince Of Darkness: Darkness Begins / Christine: Christine Attacks (Plymouth Fury)

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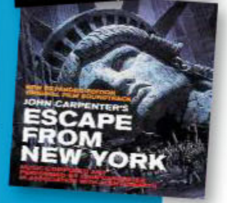

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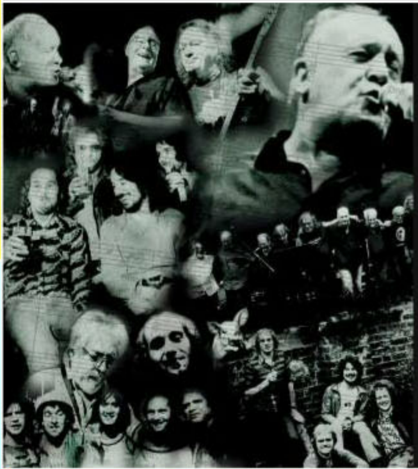

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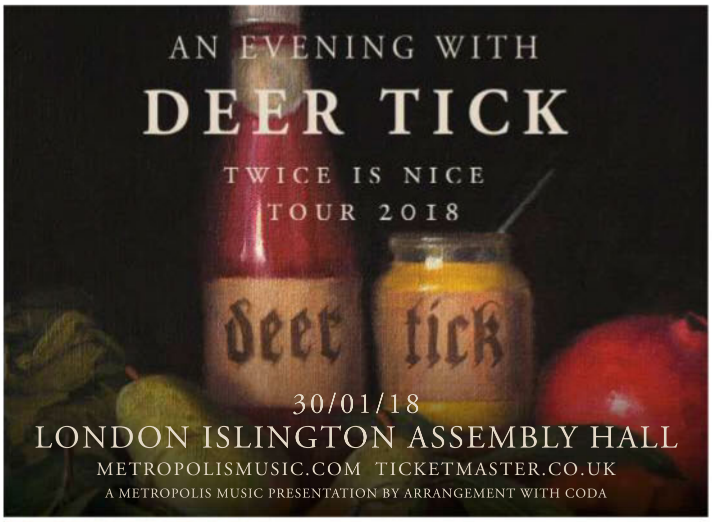
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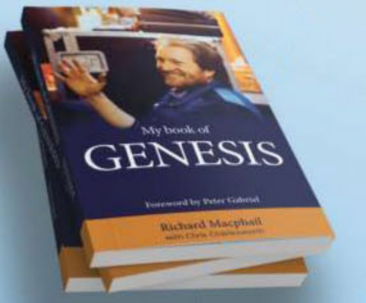

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RADIOKITTY

WERE FEMALE C&W LPs NIXED

Got a nagging rock info beef? Time, then, for Dellar's blues, record and quote lore.

Is it true that, in the early days of vinyl, the leading record companies banned LPs by female county music performers?
Valerie Poole, via e-mail

Fred says: There was no official ban, but record companies were initially reluctant to release albums by female country music singers. As a result, though the first long-playing records of any substance were released by Columbia in 1948, it wasn't until 1956 that US Decca became the first major label to release a country album by a woman, namely Kitty Wells' chart hit compilation *Country Hit Parade*. Though Patsy Montana had sold a million copies of her single I Want To Be A Cowboy's Sweetheart in 1936, it wasn't until Wells began her domination of the country music singles listings with 1952's It Wasn't God Who Made Honky-Tonk Angels that women were deemed worthy of headlining shows or having albums released in their name. Wells' hit was, in fact, banned by the NBC radio network for being "too suggestive", after which she was forbidden to perform the song at the Grand Ol' Opry. And remember, this was a singer who was a life-long member of the Churches Of Christ and who, having wed early, stayed happily married to singer-guitarist Johnny Wright for over 70 years.

Alamy (2), Getty Images (2)

DID LENNON SAY THAT!

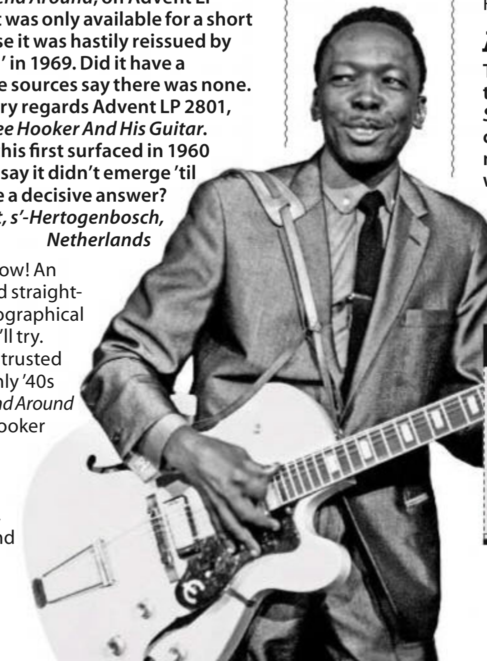
John Lennon allegedly once said, "French rock is like English wine" – a rather famous quotation in France. But I recently heard on the radio that this phrase was apocryphal. Where does the truth lie?
Vincent Prieux, Lyon, France

Fred says: I've scoured the annals in a search for a time and place where Lennon might have come up with such a put-down, but failed to find a source. Even Beatle boffin Mark Lewisohn, who was hauled into the search, likewise admitted defeat in this instance. So the apocryphal tag would appear to be correct!

CAN YOU LOOK FOR HOOK?

I've become increasingly interested in original album releases by John Lee Hooker. In particular, I'm looking for the rare, original issue of Hooker's *No Friend Around*, on Advent LP 2804. It was only available for a short while because it was hastily reissued by Red Lightnin' in 1969. Did it have a sleeve? Some sources say there was none. Another query regards Advent LP 2801, titled *John Lee Hooker And His Guitar*. Some claim this first surfaced in 1960 while others say it didn't emerge 'til 1966. Is there a decisive answer?
Jos Stikvoort, s'-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands

Fred says: Wow! An old-fashioned straight-forward discographical question. We'll try. According to trusted sources, mainly '40s comp *No Friend Around* – on which Hooker performed under such pseudonyms as Texas Slim, Delta John and Birmingham Sam – first arrived on Advent LO2804 in 1969, with only 200 pressed. Copies appear to come housed in the cover used for the later release on Red Lightnin', which suggests that sleeves for the Advent issue were never produced. That said, it seems *John Lee Hooker And His Guitar* did indeed stem from 1966, in a cover designed by the late Ray Topping.



KITTY WELLS' Country Hit Parade

Strum together: (clockwise from main) Kitty Wells with husband Johnny (left) and in-law Jack; pioneering wax; Marvin Gaye; John Lee Hooker; disputed quoter Lennon in Gallic mode.

GAYE: WHAT WENT ON?

Is it true that Marvin Gaye turned down the cover of Rolling Stone magazine?
Chris Burbridge, via e-mail

Fred says: Yes, Rolling Stone offered to put Marvin's visage on the cover of the magazine in 1982 if he would be interviewed. But he declined. According to writer Nelson George: "We were told that Marvin Gaye only wanted to be in magazines that his mother and brother would read, which meant Jet and Essence."

WAS IT OL' BLUE EYES?

Some time ago I heard Frank Sinatra's voice amid one of the BBC's Being Human episodes. But it was a song I'd never heard before. Have you any idea of its name and its availability on record?
Dennis Morley, via e-mail

Fred says: This is a track that has caused furore among Sinatra fans. The song is called And So It Goes and it can be found on YouTube performed by This Is Big Band, the title of the LP on which it first appeared. Following a bout of deep digging, it was discovered that the singer was not Sinatra but a performer named Tony Liberto. He sings regularly with the Shades Of Blue Orchestra, a Baltimore big band, and rates Sinatra, Tony Bennett and John Coltrane as major influences. Liberto's voice can also be heard on two soundtracks, The Imitation Game, the Alan Turing biopic, plus The Rebound, starring Catherine Zeta Jones.

A HAPPY EURO READER

Thanks for your reply re Euro Ballads in the July issue. I've just found *Festival De San Remo Vol.4 (1965-1967)* and when it came to Io Che Non Vivo Senza Te, it made my day. The music is evocative of a time when scooters, coffee and cigarettes weren't bad for you. It's unfortunate the duet you refer to between Dusty Springfield and Fabrizio Ferretti hasn't appeared on YouTube yet.
Phillip, via e-mail

CONTACTFRED

Any questions? Write to: Ask Fred,
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So fill in Presuming Fred's crossword and send it to Be Ear Now, MOJO, Academic House, 24-28 Oval Road, London NW1 7DT. Please include your home address, email address and phone number. The closing date for entries is **February 2**. For the rules of the quiz, see www.mojo4music.com.

For more information on the ATH-DSR9BT please visit www.audio-technica.eu/dsr

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ANSWERS

MOJO 289

Across: 1 *Bright Phoebus*, 8 Richard Thompson, 10 Lady Lynda, 13 Paint it Black, 16 *Blood On The Tracks*, 21 Nonet, 22 *Lord Upminster*, 24 *True Blue*, 25 Eve, 26 Rea, 28 Brel, 29 Eple, 30 *Reptile*, 32 *Book*, 33 Dru, 34 Ida, 35 Storms, 37 Sexy Eyes, 39 Drew, 41 Arab, 43 Lunny, 44 Nyro, 46 Meet, 48 Oliver, 49 Anne, 50 Rebel Rouser, 53 Sunday, 55 Ella, 56 Wow, 57 Dahl, 58 Blondie, 59 Triple, 60 Lily, 61 Orbital, 62 Andy White

Down: 1 Berry Gordy, 2 Itchycoo Park, 3 Heard, 4 *Hot Spot*, 5 *Erotica*, 6 Upp, 7 Tony Bennett, 9 Skids, 11 Axl Rose, 12 Ash, 14 Arnold Layne, 15 Kitten, 17 This Little Bird, 18 Ed Sheeran, 19 Roe, 20 Kate Rusby, 23 Reed, 26 *Rain Dogs*, 27 A Bad Sign, 28 Bone, 31 Paxton, 36 Say You Will, 38 Sit, 40 *Worry Bomb*, 42/52 And So It Goes, 45 Rare Bird, 46 Megadeth, 47 *Elephant*, 51 Lowell, 54 Dobro

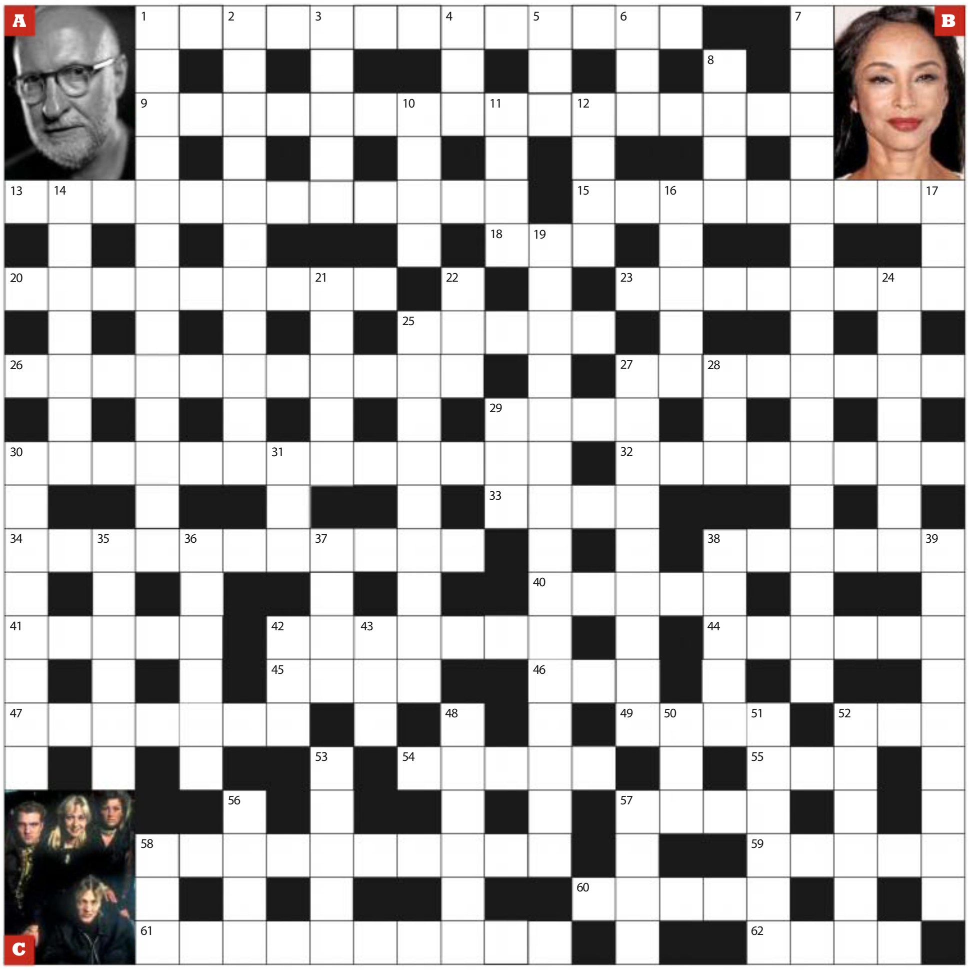
Winner: Mike Wilkinson, Newton Aycliffe; Cheryl Stevens, Sevenoaks; Pete Saxby, Harrogate; Ben Cornish, South Woodford each win an iFi nano iOne.

ACROSS

1 His songs include Beatles And Stones, Don't Brother Me and Soldier On (4,9)
9 Dylan album on which he served up Country Pie (9,7)
13 Elvis Costello's 1995 LP of covers (5,7)
15 Nik Kershaw's 'problematic' hit (3,6)
18 Mr Frehley, we presume (3)
20 Green Day album, not a sleeper (9)
23 See photoclue A (3,5)
25 Once more a Janet Jackson success (5)
26 They called him The King Of Soul (4,7)
27 Spandau member, onscreen Kray (4,4,)
29 See photoclue B (4)
30 It was the last of Talking Heads' album to be produced by Eno (6,2,5)
32 Steve Miller hit with a Batman link? (3,5)
33 Billy Idol's was of the rebel kind (4)
34 This Sonnny and Cher hit was replicated by Chrissie Hynde and UB40 (1,3,3,4)
38 Dismantle tiaras for a record label (6)
40 Dimension for a Stoned Soul Picnic (5)
41 Extremely unkind, like a Public Image Top 40 hit (5)
42 Carter USM hit, or '78 punk parodist Jonny (7)
44 Paige or 'Spanky' McFarlane (6)
45 New Model… or Baker-Gurvitz? (4)
46 Midge hides amid Lou Reed (3)
47 An ----- Wave (Alt-J) (7)
49 None of the songs on this Alice Cooper album have ever been played live (4)
52 Rock's famous money-burners (1.1.1.)
54 ----- Machine (Depeche Mode LP) (5)
55 It's a long way for Longpig's Top 40 success (3)
57 Could be a Kiki Dee song – or one by Primal Scream (4)
58 Album, made noise for Jeff Beck (4,6)
59 Neil from the Bonzos (5)
60 America, the band, reckoned you could do this (5)
61 Don re-tunes badly for an Irish band (10)
62 And --- The Trees (4)

DOWN

1 Her albums include *Mad Love* and *Silk Purse* (5,8)
2 Janis Ian recalls her earlier years (2,9)
3 Change ----- (Shed Seven) (5)
4 Waterson who was Eliza Carthy's aunt (3)
5 Dudgeon, producer for Elton John, Magna Carta etc (3)
6 Morales, Puerto Rican flautist famed for his Jungle Fantasy (3)
7 10cc's reggae celebration (9,7)
8 This Three Dog Night hit was penned by Russ Ballard (4)
10 Fleetwood Mac's little untruths (4)
11 A singer hides out amid The Police's *Zenyatta Mondatta* (4)
12 Bush, McGarrigle, Nash maybe (4)
14 Free jazz innovator Coleman (7)
16 Cesaria, Cape Verdean singer known as The Barefoot Diva (5)
17 *The --- Of The Game* (Peter Green LP) (3)
19 Scott Walker album – his only one of the '80s (7,2,6)
21 Don, once manager of Black Sabbath, etc (5)
22 *Back To The* --- (Wings' final album) (3)
24 -----, Hendricks & Ross (7)
25 Helen Reddy's 1974 US Number 1 (5,4)
27 Raised like John Legend's debut LP (3,6)
28 Whiskey drunk by Nick Cave in '89 (3)
29 Bananarama's bashful boy (3)
30 And old one won't ever let you down, reckoned Rod Stewart (8)
31 Freeez's money-making debt (1.1.1.)
35 Several musical works (6)
36 "Look at the stars, look how they shine for you" (Coldplay) (6)
37 They started out as Seymour (4)
38 ---- *Rings Out* (Blodwyn Pig album) (5)
39 See photoclue C (3,2,4)
42 Corinne Bailey --- (3)
43 Initially, Bertelsmann Music Group. (1.1.1.)
48 Irving or a Lou Reed album location (6)
50 --- Naturally (Buck Owens (3)
51 Toto's 'continental' hit (6)
52 San Francisco based string quartet (6)
53 His *Confessions* album has been certified Diamond (5)
56 Could be Wynonna, could be Naomi (4)
57 Label whose stars included William Bell and Booker T. And The M.G.'s (4)
58 Reizner or Rawls maybe (3)



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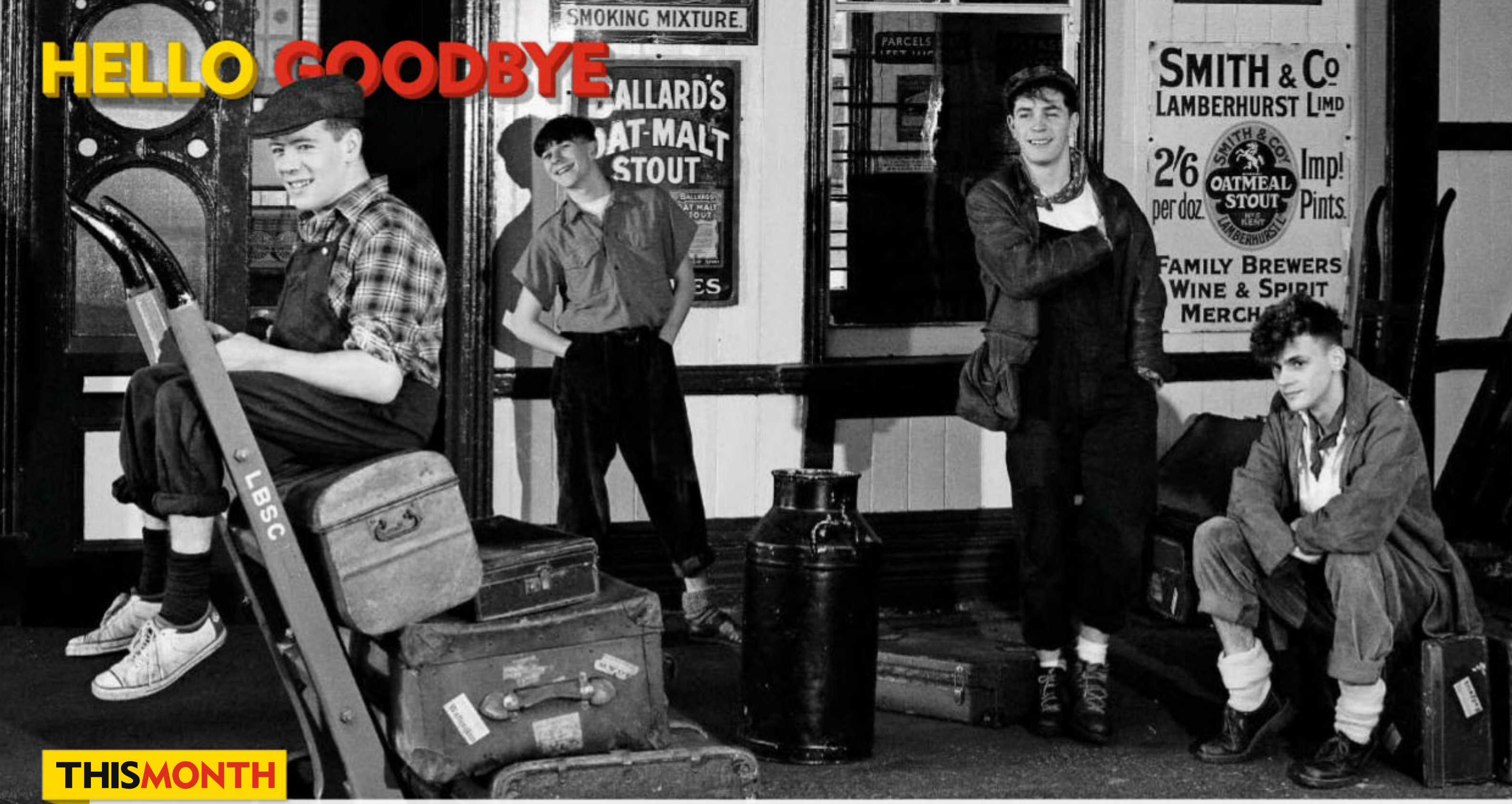

THIS MONTH

MICHAEL HEAD AND THE PALE FOUNTAINS

It began as an adventure, sparked on the bus. It ended when adulthood broke the spell.

HELLO 1980

I was in a band with Yorkie, a local legend in Liverpool. We'd been called Ho Ho Bacteria, Jerry's Egyptian Ring From Devon and then Egypt For Now. I was learning to play the guitar and the one-fingered keyboard thing wasn't really doing it for me, so we decided to go our separate ways.

I tried to learn Love's *Forever Changes* as best I could and I just evolved from there, songwriting-wise.

Hanging round back in Kenny [Kensington, Liverpool] I met Biffa [AKA Chris McCaffrey, bass], and we decided to form a band. We got our grants from college and went to [famous Liverpool music shop] Frank Hessy's, and both got our instruments on the same day.

We used to rehearse in a pub called The Lord Seldon in Kensington, and then in Biffa's cellar, which was too small. Then we roped in Jock [Whelan, drums] who lived up the road – he had a set of drums in his cellar. Biffa was the one who gave me the belief. I'd written some lyrics, and one feller said he didn't like them and told me to explain them, and Biffa said, "I like them, it's good." It was that thing we all fear, the rejection or humiliation after putting your soul on the line. He trusted me and I trusted him, and I became a songwriter then.

The rehearsals started getting better and better, so we thought, "We need a name." It was winter, and I remember talking about it when we got on the number 10 bus. We used to wear these second-hand double breasted suits, and getting on the bus was a high step, and we got fucking soaked because these dead baggy pegs with 1940s turn ups were flapping away. We were talking about The Love Fountains, which wasn't a good idea 'cos we were doing about three songs by Love, and then Biffa went "Pale Fountains". By the time we got off, we *were* the Paleys. Young bands, you put armour on and become a unit, you create a little world for yourself. At that age, it's an adventure, because you're still a bit of a kid, in a way.

Paley express: the group's early line-up (from left) Jock Whelan, Chris 'Biffa' McCaffrey, Michael Head, Andy Diagram; (bottom right) the final formation with John Head (far right); (below) Michael today.

"LAST-MINUTE NAMES… THEY SEEM TO HAPPEN QUITE A LOT."

GOODBYE 1987

We'd done two albums for Virgin [1984's *Pacific Street* and 1985's *…From Across The Kitchen Table*]. The money had run out and Virgin didn't know what to do. They wanted to use session musicians, which wasn't gonna happen. So we moved back to Liverpool from London and just stopped answering the phone.

One of the last things we did was when the Bunnymen asked us to go on tour with them [in late '85]. It was great fun, you know, and Biffa was chuffed because he was bang into them, but we didn't think it was going to be some big injection into the Paleys' future, and I think we knew subconsciously that was probably it.

Me and Biffa were still seeing each other but we weren't in each other's pockets like we had been the last five years, in hotels and vans. We'd worked our arses off and we both needed a change. Biffa had settled in with his new girlfriend and was getting into different things, film and photography. I'd got a flat on my own, and without going on about it, I discovered marijuana, which did evolve my songwriting in a different way. I kept writing with every intention of forming a new band. I didn't know it would be called Shack – that was another last-minute name, when we had a gig. It seems to happen quite a lot.

The Paleys just sort of fizzled and dissipated. We never actually turned round and said, "It's over". The last time I seen Biffa was on Renshaw Street in Liverpool on Christmas Eve in 1988, and he died a few months later. We hadn't seen each other for a while, gave each other a big hug, and he said, "Come round to ours!" He was living with Jayne Casey at the time. I said, "Yeah, I'll shoot round." [McCaffrey died of a brain tumour in 1989].

I often think of the Paleys. Those couple of years, from 17 to 20, 21, it's like 10 years, you cram so much into them. It's still a big part of me. And the number 10 route's still going, yeah.

As told to Ian Harrison

Michael Head & The Red Elastic Band's Adiós Señor Pussycat is out now on Violette.

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